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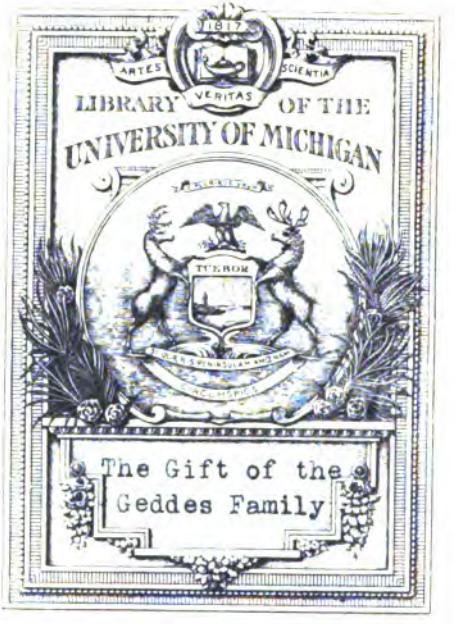


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# VIRGIN SOIL

## PART FIRST

### I

"Virgin soil should be broken up not with the primitive plough, which skims along the surface, but with the modern plough, which cuts deep."—*From the Note-book of a Proprietor-Agriculturist.*

IN the spring of 1868, about one o'clock in the day, a man of about seven and twenty years of age, carelessly and poorly clad, was ascending the back stairs of a five-story house on Officers Street in Petersburg. Clumping heavily with his patched overshoes, slowly swaying his heavy, awkward body, this man at last reached the very top of the staircase, halted in front of a broken, half-open door—and, without ringing the bell, but merely heaving a noisy sigh, precipitated himself into the small, dark vestibule.

"Is Nezhdánoff at home?"—he shouted, in a thick, loud voice.

"No, he is not—I am here; come in,"—rang out a feminine voice, which was also decidedly harsh, from the adjoining room.

"Miss Mashúrin?"—queried the newcomer.

"The very person.—And you are Ostrodúmoff?"

"Pímen Ostrodúmoff,"—replied the man; and having first carefully removed his overshoes, and then hung his little old cloak on a nail, he entered the room whence the woman's voice had proceeded.

Low-ceiled, squalid, its walls covered with paper of a muddy-green hue, this room was scantily lighted by two small, dusty windows. The only furniture it contained was an iron bedstead in one corner, a table in the centre, a few chairs, and a set of shelves piled with books.—By the table sat a woman thirty years of age, her hair devoid of covering, in a black woollen gown, smoking a cigarette. When she saw Ostrodúmoff enter, she silently offered him her broad, red hand. He shook it, as silently,—and, dropping into a chair, pulled a half-smoked cigar from his side pocket. Miss Mashúrin gave him a light,—he began to smoke, and the two, without uttering a word, without even exchanging a glance, set to emitting wreaths of bluish smoke into the dim air of the room, which, without that addition, was already sufficiently permeated with it.

The two smokers had something in common, although they did not resemble each other in features. These slovenly figures, with their big lips, teeth, and noses (Ostrodúmoff was pock-marked, to boot), were expressive of something honourable, steadfast, and hard-working.

"Have you seen Nezhdánoff?"—asked Ostrodúmoff, at last.

"Yes; he will be here directly. He has gone to the library with some books."

Ostrodúmoff spat to one side.

"Why has he taken to running about constantly? One can never catch him."

Miss Mashúrin got herself another cigarette.

"He is bored,"—she said, as she carefully lighted it.

"Bored!"—repeated Ostrodúmoff, reproachfully.—"Here's self-indulgence for you! One would suppose that he had no occupations in common with us. Here, God willing, we are getting matters in hand, in proper fashion,—but he is bored!"

"Has the letter from Moscow arrived?"—asked Miss Mashúrin, after a brief pause.

"Yes . . . . day before yesterday."

"Have you read it?"

Ostrodúmoff merely nodded.

"Well . . . . and what does it say?"

"What does it say?—we shall have to go soon."

Miss Mashúrin took the cigarette out of her mouth.—"Why so? Everything is going well there, I hear."

"Things are taking their course. Only one man has proved himself to be untrustworthy. So . . . he must be removed, if not got rid of al-

together. And there are other matters as well.—You are summoned."

"In the letter?"

"Yes; in the letter."

"Well, all right!"—she ejaculated:—"if the order is issued—there's no occasion for argument!"

"Of course not. Only, without money, it is absolutely impossible; and where are we to get it, that same money?"

Miss Mashúrin meditated.

"Nezhdánoff must procure it,"—she said, in a low voice, as though speaking to herself.

"That is precisely what I came for,"—remarked Ostrodúmoff.

"Have you the letter with you?" suddenly inquired Miss Mashúrin.

"Yes. Would you like to read it?"

"Give it to me . . . or, no, it is unnecessary. We will read it together . . . later."

"I am telling you the truth,"—grumbled Ostrodúmoff:—"you need have no doubts."

"I have none."

And again both relapsed into silence, and, as before, only wreaths of smoke escaped from their speechless lips, and rose, in faint undulations, above their frousy heads.

The clumping of overshoes resounded in the anteroom.

"There he is!"—whispered Miss Mashúrin.

The door opened a little, and through the interstice a head was thrust—only, it was not Nezhdánoff's head.

It was a small, round head, with stiff black hair, a broad, furrowed brow, small, very vivacious brown eyes beneath thick brows, with an upturned nose resembling a duck's bill, and a small, rosy, comically-formed mouth. This head took a survey, nodded, laughed,—incidentally displayed a multitude of tiny, white teeth,—and entered the room along with its puny, ugly body with short arms and somewhat crooked, somewhat lame little legs. And no sooner did Miss Mashúrin and Ostrodúmoff espy that small head, than both expressed upon their countenances something in the nature of condescending scorn, exactly as though each of them inwardly ejaculated: "Ah! *that* fellow!"—and they uttered not a single word; they did not even move. But the reception accorded to him not only did not disconcert the newly-arrived visitor, but, apparently, afforded him a certain satisfaction.

"What doth this signify?"—he said, in a squeaking voice.—"A duet? Why not a trio? And where's the leading tenor?"

"Are you inquiring about Mr. Nezhdánoff, Mr. Pákhlin?"—rejoined Ostrodúmoff, with a serious mien.

"Exactly so, Mr. Ostrodúmoff; about him."

"In all probability he will be here soon, Mr. Pákhlin."

"I am very glad to hear it, Mr. Ostrodúmoff."

The lame little man turned to Miss Mashúrin. She was sitting with her brows contracted in a frown, and continued, in a leisurely manner, to puff at her cigarette.

"How is your health, my dearest . . . . dearest. . . . Well, now, how annoying! I am always forgetting how to address you by your name and patronymic!"

Miss Mashúrin shrugged her shoulders.

"And it is quite unnecessary that you should know! My surname is known to you. What more do you require!—And what sort of a question is that—'How is your health?'—Cannot you see that I am alive?"

"Perfectly, perfectly correct!"—exclaimed Pákhlin, inflating his nostrils and twitching his eyebrows:—"if you were not alive, your most humble servant would not have the pleasure of seeing you here and conversing with you!—Ascribe my inquiry to an inveterate bad habit. And now, as to the name and patronymic. . . Do you know, it's awkward, somehow, to say 'Mashúrina'[1] straight out! I am aware, it is true, that you never sign your letters otherwise

[1] It is permissible to allude to a woman by the feminine form of her family name, without any prefix whatever. But this form—which Turgénieff uses throughout for this character—is awkward in English.—TRANSLATOR.

than 'Bonaparte'!—I mean to say, 'Mashúrina'!—But, all the same, in conversation . . . ."

"But who asked you to converse with me?"

Pákhlin began to laugh in a nervous way, as though he were choking.

"Come, that will do, my dear; my sweet little dove, give me your hand; don't get angry, for I know that you are extremely good-natured, and so am I. . . Well? . . . ."

Pákhlin extended his hand. . . . Miss Mashúrin stared gloomily at him—but she gave him her hand, nevertheless.

"If it is imperatively necessary for you to know my name,"—said she, still with the same gloomy aspect—"so be it: my name is Thékla."

"And mine is Pímen," added Ostrodúmoff, in a bass voice.

"Akh! that is very . . . . very edifying! But, in that case, tell me, oh, Thékla! and you, oh, Pímen! tell me, why you both treat me in so hostile, so persistently-hostile a manner, while I . . . ."

"Miss Mashúrin thinks,"—interrupted Ostrodúmoff,—"that, as you look at everything from its ridiculous side, it is not possible to rely upon you."

Pákhlin twirled abruptly round on his heels.

"There it is; that 's the perpetual mistake of people who condemn me, most respected Pímen: In the first place, I am not always laughing; and,

in the second place, that does not prevent the possibility of relying upon me, which is proved by the flattering confidence which I have more than once enjoyed in your own ranks! I am a man of honour, most respected Pímen!"

Ostrodúmoff muttered something between his teeth, while Pákhlin nodded his head, and repeated, this time without the shadow of a smile:

"No! I am not always laughing! I am not at all a jolly man! Just look at me!"

Ostrodúmoff looked at him.—As a matter of fact, when Pákhlin was not laughing, when he was silent, his face assumed an almost dejected, almost frightened expression; it became amusing, and even malicious, as soon as he opened his mouth. But Ostrodúmoff made no comment.

Again Pákhlin addressed himself to Miss Mashúrin.

"Well, and how are your studies progressing? Are you making a success in your truly humane art? 'T is a difficult job, it strikes me—to aid an inexperienced citizen at his first entrance into God's world."

"'T is nothing; there is no difficulty if he is not much bigger in size than you,"—retorted Miss Mashúrin, who had just passed her examinations as a midwife,—and she indulged in a self-satisfied smile. A year and a half previously, abandoning her family, a family of gentry in the south of Russia, she had come to Petersburg

with six rubles in her pocket; she had entered an obstetrical institution, and by dint of incessant toil, she had obtained the coveted certificate. She was a virgin, . . . . and a very chaste virgin. "That is nothing remarkable!" some sceptic will say, recalling what has been said about her personal appearance. It is remarkable and rare! we permit ourselves to remark.

On hearing her retort, Pákhlin again burst out laughing.

"You 're a gallant fellow, my dear!"—he exclaimed.—"You have reprimanded me splendidly! I deserved it! Why have I remained such a dwarf? But where has our host vanished to?"

It was not without a purpose that Pákhlin changed the conversation. He could not reconcile himself to his tiny stature, with his ill-favoured figure as a whole. He was the more sensitive on that point because he was passionately fond of women. What would not he have given to find favour in their sight! The consciousness of his miserable exterior preyed upon him far more than his insignificant extraction, than his unenviable social position. Pákhlin's father was a plain burgher, who had served through all sorts of iniquities up to the rank of Titular Councillor, a cunning intermediary in lawsuits, a speculator. He had managed estates and houses, and so had acquired a little money; but he had become

strongly addicted to drink toward the end of his life, and had left nothing after his death. Young Pákhlin (his name was Síla .... Síla Samsónitch[1] —which, also, he regarded as a jeer at himself) had been educated in a Commercial school, where he had learned the German language capitally. After various decidedly heavy trials he had at last obtained a position in a private counting-house, at a salary of fifteen hundred rubles a year. On this money he maintained himself, his invalid aunt, and his hunchbacked sister. At the time of our story he had just entered his twenty-eighth year. Pákhlin was acquainted with a multitude of students, young men who liked him because of his cynical vivacity, the merry bitterness of his self-confident speeches, his one-sided, far from indubitable learning, devoid of pedantry. Only now and then did he suffer at their hands. Once he was late at a political gathering..... On entering, he immediately began to make hurried excuses. . . . "Pákhlin poor is chicken-hearted,"—some one in the corner began to chant,—and all burst out laughing. Pákhlin at last began to laugh himself, although his heart ached. "He has spoken the truth, the rascal!"—he thought to himself. He had made acquaintance with Nezhdánoff at a Greek eating-house, whither he was in

[1] That is, "Strong, son of Samson."—TRANSLATOR.

the habit of going to dine, and where he occasionally gave expression to extremely free and harsh opinions. He asserted that the chief cause of his democratic frame of mind was the bad Greek cookery, which irritated his liver.

"Yes . . . . just so . . . . what has become of our host?"—repeated Pákhlin.—"I notice that, for some time past, he has been in low spirits. Can it be that he is in love—God forbid!"

Miss Mashúrin frowned.

"He went to the library for books,—and he has no time to fall in love, and no one to fall in love with."

"And how about you?" came near bursting from Pákhlin's lips.

"I wish to see him,"—he said aloud,—"because I must have a talk with him about an important affair."

"What affair?"—interposed Ostrodúmoff.—"Our cause?"

"Perhaps it is your cause . . . . that is to say, our cause in general."

Ostrodúmoff snorted. In his secret soul he doubted, but he immediately thought: "But the devil only knows! He 's such a sly dog!"

"Here he comes at last,"—said Miss Mashúrin, suddenly,—and in her small, ugly eyes, riveted on the door of the anteroom, there rose a certain

warm and tender flash, a certain bright, deep, inward spark.

The door opened, and this time, with cap on head and a bundle of books under his arm, there entered a young man of twenty-three—Nezhdánoff himself.

## II

At the sight of the visitors in his room, he halted on the threshold, scanned them all, flung aside his cap, dropped his books straight on the floor, and going to the bed, he perched himself on its edge, without uttering a word. His handsome, white face, which seemed still whiter from the dark-red hue of his waving chestnut hair, expressed displeasure and vexation.

Miss Mashúrin turned slightly away and bit her lip; Ostrodúmoff muttered:

"At last!"

Pákhlin was the first to approach Nezhdánoff.

"What 's the matter with thee, Alexyéi Dmítrievitch, the Russian Hamlet? Has any one vexed thee? Or hast thou just got down in the mouth—without any cause?"

"Please stop, thou Russian Mephistopheles," —replied Nezhdánoff, irritably.—"I 'm not in the mood to vie with thee in flat witticisms."

Pákhlin burst into a laugh:

"Thou expressest thyself inaccurately: if it 's witty, it 's not flat; if it 's flat, it 's not witty."

"Well, very good, very good. . . Thou art a wit, everybody knows that."

"And thou art in a nervous condition,"—ejaculated Pákhlin, in jerks.—"Has something actually happened?"

"Nothing in particular has happened;—but it has come to pass that you can't put your nose into the street in this detestable town, in Petersburg, without running up against some triviality, some stupidity, some outrageous injustice, some nonsense or other! It 's impossible to live here any longer."

"That 's exactly why thou hast published in the newspapers that thou wouldst like a place as private tutor, and wert willing to leave town,"—muttered Ostrodúmoff again.

"Of course; with the greatest pleasure I will go away from here! If I could only find a fool who would offer me a place!"

"First thou must discharge thy obligations *here*,"—said Miss Mashúrin, significantly, without ceasing to gaze to one side.

"That is to say?"—inquired Nezhdánoff, turning abruptly round toward her. Miss Mashúrin compressed her lips.

"Ostrodúmoff will tell you."

Nezhdánoff turned to Ostrodúmoff. But the latter merely grunted and cleared his throat, as much as to say, "wait a bit."

"Yes, without jesting, as an actual fact,"—interposed Pákhlin:—"thou hast heard something, something unpleasant!"

Nezhdánoff sprang up from the bed, as though something had exploded beneath him.

"What other unpleasantness would you have?"—he shouted suddenly, in a ringing voice.—"Half Russia is dying of hunger. The *Moscow News* is triumphing, they want to introduce classical studies, they are prohibiting student funds, everywhere there is espionage, oppression, tale-bearing, lying and falsehood—we cannot take a step in any direction . . . and that is not enough for him, he still expects a fresh unpleasantness; he thinks that I am jesting . . . . Basánoff has been arrested,"—he added, lowering his voice somewhat:—"they told me at the library."

Ostrodúmoff and Miss Mashúrin raised their heads simultaneously.

"Dear friend Alexyéi Dmítrievitch,"—began Pákhlin,—"thou art excited—which is easily comprehensible . . . . but hast thou forgotten in what age, and in what country we live?—For, with us, the drowning man must himself fabricate the straw at which he is obliged to clutch!—Where 's the chance to be sentimental under such circumstances? We must learn, brother, how to look the devil straight in the eye, and not get angry, like children. . . ."

"Akh, please, please stop that!"—interrupted Nezhdánoff, sadly, and he even knit his brows, as though in pain.—"Thou art an energetic

man, every one knows that,—thou fearest nothing and no one. . . ."

"I fear no one, don't I?"—Pákhlin was beginning. . . . .

"But who could have betrayed Basánoff?" —went on Nezhdánoff,—"I do not understand!"

"A friend,—of course.—That 's what those fine fellows—friends—are for. Be on your guard with them! For instance,—I had a friend, and he seemed to be a fine man: he was so anxious for me, for my reputation! You see, this is what he used to do: he would come to me: . . . . 'Just imagine,' he would cry: 'what stupid calumny about you has been disseminated: people declare that you poisoned your own uncle,—that you were introduced into a certain house, and you immediately sat down with your back to the hostess—and sat so throughout the evening! And she wept, wept with the affront.—Such nonsense, you know! such folly! What fools could believe it?'—and what happened? A year later I quarrelled with that same friend. . . And he wrote to me, in his farewell letter: 'You, who put your uncle to death!—you, who were not ashamed to insult a respectable lady, by sitting with your back to her!' . . . and so forth, and so on.—That 's what friends are like!"

Ostrodúmoff exchanged glances with Miss Mashúrin.

"Alexyéi Dmítrievitch!"—he clashed out in his heavy bass voice: he was obviously desirous of putting a stop to the eruption of words which had begun: "a letter from Vasíly Nikoláitch has arrived from Moscow."

Nezhdánoff shuddered slightly, and dropped his eyes.

"What does he write?"—he asked at last.

"Why, here . . . . . we and she"—Ostrodúmoff indicated Miss Mashúrin with his eyebrows—"must go."

"What?—she is summoned also?"

"Yes, she also."

"What stands in the way?"

"'T is plain enough what . . . . 't is a question of money."

Nezhdánoff rose from the bed and walked to the window.

"Is much needed?"

"Fifty rubles . . . . Nothing less will do."

Nezhdánoff said nothing.

"I have none at present," he whispered at last, as he drummed on the glass with his fingers, —"but . . . I can get some. Hast thou the letter?"

"The letter? It . . . yes, I have it . . . . . of course . . . . ."

"But why do you conceal everything from me?"—exclaimed Pákhlin.—"Am I not worthy of your confidence?—Even if I were not in com-

plete sympathy . . . with that which you are undertaking,—do you suppose that I am capable of betraying or blabbing?"

"Unintentionally . . . . you might,"—rumbled Ostrodúmoff, in his bass voice.

"Neither intentionally nor unintentionally!—There is Miss Mashúrin staring at me and smiling . . . . but I will tell you . . . . ."

"I 'm not smiling at all,"—said Miss Mashúrin, angrily.

"But I will tell you,"—went on Pákhlin,—"that you, gentlemen, have not a fine scent; that you don't know how to distinguish who are your true friends! A man laughs, and you think he is not serious . . . ."

"And is n't that so, pray?"—said Miss Mashúrin, still angrily.

"Here, now, for instance,"—resumed Pákhlin, with fresh force, this time not even replying to Miss Mashúrin—"you are in need of money . . . and Nezhdánoff has none at present . . . . But I can give it."

Nezhdánoff turned round hastily from the window.

"No . . . no . . . why should you? I will get it . . . . I will get a part of my allowance in advance . . . . . It occurs to my memory that *they* are in debt to me. But see here, Ostrodúmoff, show us that letter."

At first Ostrodúmoff remained impassive for

some time; then he glanced around him; then he rose, bent his whole body forward, and pulling up his trousers, he drew a carefully-folded scrap of blue paper out of the leg of his boot; as he drew it out he blew upon it, for some unknown reason, and handed it to Nezhdánoff.

The latter took the paper, unfolded it, read it through with care, and gave it to Miss Mashúrin. . . . The latter first rose from her chair, then read it also, and returned the paper to Nezhdánoff, although Pákhlin stretched out his hand for it. Nezhdánoff shrugged his shoulders and handed the mysterious letter to Pákhlin. Pákhlin, in his turn, ran his eyes over the paper, and pursing up his lips with great significance, solemnly and softly laid it on the table. Then Ostrodúmoff took it, lighted a large match, which disseminated a powerful odour of sulphur, and having first raised the paper high above his head, as though he were exhibiting it to all present, burned it to ashes on the match, not sparing his own fingers, and flung the ashes into the stove. No one uttered a word, no one even moved during the course of this operation. The eyes of all present were fixed on the floor. Ostrodúmoff wore a concentrated and business-like aspect, Nezhdánoff's face seemed malignant, but Pákhlin displayed an effort; Miss Mashúrin seemed to be celebrating some service of worship.

Two minutes passed thus. . . Then all felt

rather awkward. Pákhlin was the first to feel the necessity of breaking the silence.

"Well, how is it to be?"—he began:—"Is my sacrifice on the altar of the fatherland to be accepted, or not? Am I to be permitted to contribute, if not fifty, at least twenty-five or thirty rubles toward the common enterprise?"

Nezhdánoff suddenly flared up. It seemed as though he were boiling with vexation. . . . . The solemn cremation of the letter had not decreased it,—it had only been awaiting a pretext in order to burst forth.

"I have already told thee that it was not necessary, not necessary. . . not necessary! I will not allow it, I will not accept it. I will get money, I will get it immediately. I need aid from no one!"

"Well, brother,"—said Pákhlin,—"I perceive, although thou art a revolutionist, thou art not a democrat!"

"Say it straight out, that I am an aristocrat!"

"Well, thou really art an aristocrat . . . . to a certain degree."

Nezhdánoff emitted a constrained laugh:

"That is, thou wishest to hint at the fact that I am an illegitimate son. Thou art wasting thy pains in vain, my dear fellow. . . . I do not forget it, even without thy reminding me of it."

Pákhlin wrung his hands.

"For heaven's sake, Alyósha, what is the mat-

ter with thee? How canst thou put such a construction on my words? I do not recognise thee to-day."—Nezhdánoff made an impatient gesture with his head and shoulders.—"Basánoff's arrest has put thee out of sorts; but, seest thou, he behaved himself so incautiously. . . ."

"He did not conceal his convictions,"—put in Miss Mashúrin gloomily:—"it is not our place to condemn him!"

"Yes; only he ought to have kept in mind, also, his friends, whom he may now compromise."

"Why do you assume that of him? . . ." rumbled Ostrodúmoff, in his turn:—"Basánoff is a man of steadfast character; he will not betray any one. And as for lack of caution . . . . do you know what? Not every one possesses the gift of being cautious, Mr. Pákhlin!"

Pákhlin took offence, and was on the point of retorting, but Nezhdánoff stopped him.

"O Lord!"—he exclaimed,—"do me a favour: let's drop politics for a time."

A silence ensued.

"I met Skoropíkhin to-day,"—remarked Pákhlin, at last,—"our All-Russia critic, and æsthetic and enthusiast. What an intolerable creature! He's forever seething and frothing, exactly like a bottle of wretched sour-cabbage beer . . . . The waiter, in his flight, has stuffed his finger into it in place of the cork; a fat raisin has got stranded in the neck,—it keeps on

bubbling and hissing,—and when all the froth has flown out of it, at the bottom there will remain at most a few drops of vile liquid, which not only slakes no one's thirst, but merely causes a colic. . . . . A very deleterious individual for young folks!"

The comparison employed by Pákhlin, although true and accurate, did not evoke a smile on the face of any one. Ostrodúmoff alone remarked that there was no need to pity young folks who were capable of taking an interest in æsthetics, even if Skoropíkhin did lead them astray.

"But, good gracious, stop!"—exclaimed Pákhlin with heat; the less sympathy he encountered, the more fervent did he become:—"let us assume that is not a political question, but still one of importance. If you listen to Skoropíkhin, every ancient artistic production is good for nothing, from the very fact that it is ancient. . . . But in that case, art, the arts in general, are nothing but a fashion—and it is not worth while to talk seriously about them. If there is nothing stable about them, nothing eternal,—then the devil take them! In science, in mathematics, for example: you do not consider Euler, Laplace, Gauss as antiquated triflers? You are ready to recognise their authority, but Raphael and Mozart are fools? And your pride rises in rebellion against their authority? The laws of art are

more difficult to grasp than the laws of science. . . . I agree, but they exist; and he who does not perceive them is blind; voluntarily or involuntarily, it makes no difference!"

Pákhlin relapsed into silence . . . . and no one uttered a word, just as though they had all filled their mouths with water—as though they were all rather ashamed of him. Ostrodúmoff alone muttered:

"And nevertheless, I do not in the least commiserate those young people whom Skoropíkhin leads astray."

"Well now, I wash my hands of you!" thought Pákhlin. "I 'm going!"

He had come to Nezhdánoff with the object of imparting to him his ideas concerning the transmission from abroad of the *Polar Star* (the *Bell*[1] no longer existed)—but the conversation had taken such a turn that it was better not to raise that question. Pákhlin had already taken up his hat, when suddenly, without any preliminary noise or knock, there resounded from the anteroom a remarkably agreeable, manly, and rich baritone voice, the very sound of which exhaled some unusually noble, well-bred, and even fragrant element.

"Is Mr. Nezhdánoff at home?"

"Yes,"—replied Nezhdánoff, at last.

[1] Alexander Hertsen's famous revolutionary journal, published abroad and regularly smuggled into Russia.—TRANSLATOR.

The door opened discreetly and smoothly, and slowly removing a shiny hat from his comely, closely-clipped head, a man about forty years of age, of lofty stature, stately and majestic, entered the room. Dressed in a very handsome cloth paletot with a beaver collar, although the month of April was already drawing to its close —he stunned them all, Nezhdánoff, Pákhlin, even Miss Mashúrin . . . even Ostrodúmoff!— with the elegant self-confidence of his carriage and the amiable composure of his greeting. All involuntarily rose to their feet on his appearance.

## III

THE elegant man approached Nezhdánoff and, with a benevolent smile, remarked: "I have already had the pleasure of meeting you, and even of conversing with you, Mr. Nezhdánoff, day before yesterday, if you will be good enough to recall it—in the theatre." (The visitor paused, as though waiting; Nezhdánoff bowed his head slightly, and nodded.)—"Yes! . . . and to-day I have presented myself to you in consequence of the advertisement which you put in the newspapers. I should like to have a talk with you, if I shall not be in the way of the ladies and gentlemen present. . . ." (The visitor bowed to Miss Mashúrin, and waved his hand, clad in a greyish glove of undressed kid, in the direction of Pákhlin and Ostrodúmoff)—"and if I do not disturb them. . . . ."

"No . . . . why should you? . . . ." replied Nezhdánoff, not without an effort.—"These gentlemen will permit . . . . Will you not be seated?"

The visitor made a pleasant inclination, and amiably grasping the back of a chair, drew it toward him, but did not sit down,—as every one in the room was standing,—but merely cast his brilliant though half-closed eyes around.

"Good-bye, Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—said Miss Mashúrin suddenly:—"I will come in later."

"So will I,"—added Ostrodúmoff.—"I also . . . . will see you later."

Avoiding the visitor, and as though by way of defying him, Miss Mashúrin grasped Nezhdánoff's hand, gave it a hearty shake, and left the room without bowing to any one. Ostrodúmoff followed her, clumping unnecessarily with his boots, and even snorting a couple of times, as much as to say: "Take that, thou beaver collar!" The visitor followed the two with a polite, rather curious glance. Then he fixed it on Pákhlin, as though expecting that he, also, would follow the example of the two visitors who had withdrawn; but Pákhlin, on whose countenance, from the very moment of the visitor's appearance, a peculiar, restrained smile had dawned, stepped aside and took refuge in a corner. Then the visitor seated himself on the chair. Nezhdánoff also sat down.

"My name is Sipyágin; perhaps you have heard it,"—began the visitor, with proud modesty.

But first we must narrate in what manner Nezhdánoff had met him at the theatre.

On the occasion of Sadóvsky's arrival from Moscow, Ostróvsky's play, "Shoemaker, Stick to Your Last,"[1] had been given. The part of

[1] Literally, "Don't seat yourself in any one's sledge but your own."—TRANSLATOR.

Rusakóff was, as every one knows, one of the famous actor's favourite rôles. Before dinner Nezhdánoff went to the theatre office, where he found a good many people assembled. He was preparing to buy a ticket for the pit;—but, at the moment when he stepped up to the opening of the office, an officer who stood behind him shouted to the ticket-seller, pushing three rubles over Nezhdánoff's head: "He" (meaning Nezhdánoff) "will probably have to get change—but I do not need it:—so please give me, as quickly as possible, a seat in the first row. . . . I 'm in a hurry!"—"Excuse me, Mr. Officer,"—said Nezhdánoff, in a sharp voice,—"I myself wish to buy a seat in the first row,"—and thereupon he flung into the little window, a three-ruble note—his entire cash capital. The ticket-seller gave him his ticket; and, in the evening, Nezhdánoff found himself in the aristocratic section of the Alexandra Theatre.

He was badly dressed, devoid of gloves, in unblacked boots—he felt confused, and was vexed with himself for having that feeling. Beside him, on the right, sat a general, besprinkled with stars;—on the left, that same elegant gentleman, Privy Councillor Sipyágin, whose appearance, two days later, had so excited Miss Mashúrin and Ostrodúmoff. The general glanced at Nezhdánoff from time to time as at something indecent, unexpected, and even insulting; Si-

pyágin, on the contrary, cast at him glances which, although sidelong, were not hostile.—All the persons who surrounded Nezhdánoff seemed, in the first place, to be personages rather than persons; in the second place, they were all very well acquainted with one another, and exchanged brief conversations, remarks, or even simple exclamations and greetings—some of them, even, over Nezhdánoff's head; but he sat motionless and awkward in his seat,—like a regular pariah. He felt bitter and ashamed and wretched in soul; he derived very little enjoyment from Ostróvsky's comedy and from Sadóvsky's acting. And, all at once, oh marvel! during one of the intermissions between the acts, his neighbour on the left—not the star-bestudded general, but the other, who had no insignia of distinction on his breast—politely and softly entered into conversation with him, with a sort of insinuating condescension. He began to talk about Ostróvsky's piece, desiring to learn from Nezhdánoff,—as from "one of the representatives of the rising generation,"—what was his opinion regarding it. Astounded, almost frightened, Nezhdánoff answered abruptly and in monosyllables, at first .... his heart even began to beat violently; but afterward, he was vexed with himself; why was he so agitated by it? Was not he just as much of a man as all the rest of them? And he began to set forth his opinion, without embarrassment,

without reserve, and, at last, so loudly, and with such enthusiasm, that he evidently disturbed his star-bestudded neighbour. Nezhdánoff was an ardent admirer of Ostróvsky;—but, notwithstanding all his respect for the talent displayed by the author in his comedy, "Shoemaker, Stick to Your Last," he could not approve of the very evident desire contained therein, to ridicule civilisation in the caricatured personage Víkhoreff.—His courteous neighbour listened to him with attention, with sympathy; and, at the following intermission, he again entered into conversation with him, but this time not about Ostróvsky's comedy, but in a general way, about various worldly, scientific, and even political topics. Obviously, he was interested in his young and eloquent interlocutor. Nezhdánoff, as before, not only did not stand on ceremony, but even put on more steam, as the expression runs. "If you ask questions—here goes!" What he aroused in his neighbour the general was no longer mere uneasiness, but wrath and suspicion. At the conclusion of the play, Sipyágin bade farewell to Nezhdánoff in a very affectionate manner—but did not ask his name, and did not mention his own. While waiting for his carriage on the staircase, he encountered a good friend of his, Imperial-Adjutant Prince G.—"I was watching thee from my box,"—the prince said to him, laughing lightly through his perfumed mous-

tache:—"dost thou know with whom thou wert talking?"—"No, I don't know! dost thou?"—"He was n't a stupid young fellow, was he, hey?"—"Very far from stupid: who is he?"—Then the prince bent down to his ear and whispered in French:—"My brother. Yes; he is my brother. He is my father's illegitimate son . . . he is called Nezhdánoff. I 'll tell thee about it some day. . . . My father did not expect it in the least, so he named him Nezhdánoff.[1] But he arranged his fate for him . . . *il lui a fait un sort.* . . . We pay him a pension. That young man has a head . . . and, by my father's kindness, he has received a good education. Only he has got entirely off the track; he 's a republican, or something of that sort. . . . We do not receive him. . . . *Il est impossible!* But goodbye, they are calling my carriage."—The prince departed, and on the following day Sipyágin read in the *Police News* the advertisement which Nezhdánoff had inserted—and went to him. . . .

"My name is Sipyágin,"—he said to Nezhdánoff, as he sat in front of him on a straw-bottomed chair, and surveyed him with his impressive gaze:—"I learned from the newspapers that you wish to secure a place as tutor, and I have come to you with the following proposition. I am married; I have one son—nine years of age. The boy is extremely gifted—I will say that

[1] "The Unexpected."—TRANSLATOR.

frankly. We spend the greater part of the summer and autumn in the country, in the Government of S. . . . , five miles from the governmental capital. So here now: would you like to go thither with us for the vacation, to teach my son the Russian language and history—the subjects which you mention in your advertisement? I venture to think that you will be satisfied with me, with my family, and with the location of my manor-house. There is a very fine park, a river, good air, a spacious house. . . . Do you accept? In that case, all that remains is to inquire your terms, although I do not suppose,"—added Sipyágin with a slight grimace,—"that any difficulties will arise between us on that score."

All the while that Sipyágin was talking Nezhdánoff stared intently at him, at his small head, which was thrown somewhat backward, at his low, narrow, but intelligent brow, his thin, Roman nose, his pleasant eyes, his regular lips, from which the gracious speech flowed smoothly, at his long side-whiskers, which drooped after the English fashion—stared and wondered.—"What 's the meaning of this?" he thought. "Why is this man fairly paying court to me? This aristocrat—and I!—How did we come together? And what has brought him to me?"

He was so immersed in his own reflections that he did not even open his mouth, when Sipyágin,

at the conclusion of his speech, relapsed into silence, awaiting an answer. Sipyágin darted a glance at the corner where Pákhlin had taken refuge, and was devouring him with his eyes in a manner quite equal to that of Nezhdánoff—as much as to say, "Is not the presence of this third person keeping Nezhdánoff from speaking out?"—Sipyágin elevated his eyebrows, as though submitting to the strangeness of the surroundings into which he had stumbled, by his own volition, however,—and following his brows he elevated his voice and repeated his question.

Nezhdánoff gave a start.

"Of course,"—he began, somewhat hurriedly;—"I . . . . accept . . . with pleasure . . . although I must confess . . . that I cannot avoid feeling some surprise . . . as I have no recommendations . . . and, moreover, the very opinions which I expressed to you day before yesterday in the theatre ought rather to deter you. . . . ."

"On that point you are entirely mistaken, my dear Alexyéi . . . Alexyéi Dmítritch! I believe that is your name,"—remarked Sipyágin, displaying his teeth.—"I, I venture to say, am known as a man of liberal, progressive convictions; and, on the contrary, your opinions, setting aside everything about them which is peculiar to youth, which is inclined—do not take offence!—to a certain exaggeration,—those opinions of yours are not in the least antagonistic to my own

—and they even please me by their youthful fervour!"

Sipyágin talked without the slightest hesitation: his round, fluent speech flowed like honey on oil.

"My wife shares my manner of thought,"—he went on:—"her views more nearly resemble yours, perhaps, than they do mine; that is easily comprehensible: she is younger!—When, the other day, after our meeting, I read in the newspaper your name, which, I will remark, by-the-bye, contrary to general custom, was published, along with your address (I had already learned your name in the theatre), then .. it ... that fact impressed me, I perceived in it—in that coincidence—a certain—pardon the superstition of the expression—a certain finger of Fate, so to speak!—You have alluded to recommendations; but I require no recommendations.—Your appearance, your personality arouse my sympathy. That is enough for me. I have become accustomed to trust my eye. So—may I hope? You accept?"

"I do .... of course ....." replied Nezhdánoff —"and I shall endeavour to justify your confidence.—Only, permit me to warn you, now, of one thing: I am ready to be your son's tutor, but not his governor. I am not capable of that—and I do not care to enslave myself; I will not deprive myself of my freedom."

Sipyágin lightly waved his hand in the air, as though chasing away a fly.

"Be at your ease, my dearest fellow. . . . You are not of the flour from which governors are baked;—and I do not want a governor. I am seeking a teacher—and I have found him. Well, and how about the terms—the pecuniary terms—the loathsome coin?"

Nezhdánoff made an effort to say something. . . .

"Listen,"—said Sipyágin, bending his whole body forward, and touching Nezhdánoff's knee with the tips of his fingers in a caressing manner: —"among well-bred people such questions are settled in two words. I offer you one hundred rubles a month; your travelling expenses there and back are, of course, paid by me.—Do you accept?"

Again Nezhdánoff flushed crimson.

"That is a great deal more than I had intended to ask . . . . because . . . I . . . ."

"Very good, very good indeed . . . ." interrupted Sipyágin. . "I look upon this matter as settled . . . and on you—as a member of my family."—He rose from his chair, and suddenly grew very jolly and florid of manner, exactly as though he had received a gift. In all his movements a certain pleasant familiarity and even sportiveness made its appearance.

"We shall set out in a few days,"—he said,

in a free-and-easy tone:—"I love to welcome the spring in the country, although, by the nature of my occupation, I am a prosaic man, and chained to the town. . . . And therefore, permit me to consider your first month as beginning with to-day. My wife and son are already in Moscow. She has gone on ahead. We shall find them in the country . . . . in the lap of nature. You and I will travel together . . . . as bachelors . . . . he, he!"—Sipyágin laughed coquettishly and abruptly through his nose.—"And now . . . ."

He pulled out of the pocket of his overcoat a silver pocket-book enamelled in black, and drew thence a card.

"This is my present address.—Drop in—say to-morrow. That 's it . . . about twelve o'clock. We will discuss the matter further. I will make known to you certain ideas of mine in regard to education. . . . Well—and we will decide upon the day of our departure."—Sipyágin shook Nezhdánoff's hand.—"And do you know what?" he added, lowering his voice and tilting his head on one side:—"If you require an advance payment . . . . Please do not stand on ceremony! take a month's salary in advance, if you like."

Nezhdánoff simply did not know what reply to make; and with the same bewilderment as before, he gazed at the bright, courteous, and, at the same time, unfamiliar face which had ap-

proached so close to his own and was smiling at him in so gracious a manner.

"You do not need it—hey?" whispered Sipyágin.

"If you will allow me, I will tell you that to-morrow,"—articulated Nezhdánoff, at last.

"Capital! So—farewell for the present! Until to-morrow!"—Sipyágin released Nezhdánoff's hand, and was on the point of withdrawing.....

"Permit me to ask you,"—said Nezhdánoff, suddenly,—"you have just told me that you learned my name in the theatre.—From whom did you learn it?"

"From whom?—Why, from one of your intimate acquaintances—and, apparently, a kinsman of yours—Prince . . . . Prince G."

"The Imperial-Adjutant?"

"Yes, from him."

Nezhdánoff turned scarlet—worse than before—and opened his mouth . . . but said nothing. Again Sipyágin shook his hand—only in silence this time—and, bowing first to him and then to Pákhlin, put on his hat just as he reached the door, and went out, wearing on his face a self-satisfied smile; it expressed a consciousness of the profound impression which his visit must have produced.

## IV

Before Sipyágin had fairly crossed the threshold, Pákhlin sprang from his chair, and rushing at Nezhdánoff began to congratulate him.

"What a sturgeon thou hast hooked!"—he kept repeating, snickering and kicking his feet about.—"Why, dost thou know who that is? The famous Sipyágin, Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber—in a certain sense, a pillar of society, a future Minister!"

"He is totally unknown to me,"—said Nezhdánoff gruffly.

Pákhlin made a gesture of despair.

"That 's the trouble with us, Alexyéi Dmítritch, that we know no one! We want to act, we want to turn the whole world upside down, but we live apart from that same world, we associate only with two or three friends, we grind round and round in one spot, in a narrow circle. . . ."

"Excuse me," interposed Nezhdánoff: "that is not true. We only decline to make acquaintance with our enemies; but with persons of our own stamp, with the masses, we enter into constant relations."

"Stop, stop, stop, stop!"—interrupted Pá-

khlin, in his turn.—" In the first place, as to our enemies, permit me to recall to your mind Goethe's verse:

Wer den Dichter will versteh'n
Muss im Dichter's Lande geh'n . . .

—and I say:

Wer die *Feinde* will versteh'n
Muss im *Feindes* lande geh'n. . .

It is stupid to avoid one's enemies, not to know their habits and manner of life;—Stu . . pid! . . . Yes, yes! If I wish to shoot a wolf in the forest I must know his lairs. . . . In the second place, you just said, ' We enter into relations with the masses.' . . . My dear soul!—In 1862 the Poles went off ' to the forest '—and now we are going off into the same forest, that is to say, the masses of the people, which for us are as dense and dark as any forest! "

" Well, then, and what is to be done, according to thy opinion? "

" The Indians fling themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut,"—continued Pákhlin, gloomily;—" it crushes them, and they die—in bliss.—We, also, have a Juggernaut of our own. . . It certainly crushes us, but it affords us no bliss."

" So, then, what is to be done, in thy opinion? " —repeated Nezhdánoff, almost in a shout.

"Write novels with a tendency?—is that what thou meanest?"

Pákhlin flung his hands apart and lolled his head on his left shoulder.

"Thou mightest write novels—in any case—as thou possessest the literary vein. . . . Come, don't get angry, I won't do it again! I know thou dost not like to have people refer to that; but I agree with thee: to compose such things, 'with stuffing,' and with new-fangled twists and turns: 'Akh! I love you! she *ran up* . . .' 'It makes no difference to me, he *scratched!*'—is anything but a cheerful matter!—Therefore, I repeat: get into close relations with all classes, beginning with the highest! You cannot place your whole reliance on Ostrodúmoffs! They are honest, fine people—but, on the other hand, they are stupid! stupid! Just look at our friend. The very soles of his boots are not the sort that clever people have. Why, for instance, did he leave here a while ago?—He did not wish to remain in the same room, to breathe the same air with an aristocrat!"

"I must request thee not to express thyself in that manner concerning Ostrodúmoff, in my presence,"—Nezhdánoff caught him up vehemently.—"He wears thick boots, because they are cheap."

"I did not mean it in that sense,"—Pákhlin was beginning. . . .

"If he does not wish to remain in the same room with an aristocrat,"—went on Nezhdánoff, raising his voice,—"I laud him for that;—but the chief thing of all is: he will know how to sacrifice himself—and, if necessary, he will go to his death, which is something that thou and I will never do!"

Pákhlin made a wry face, and pointed at his thin, deformed little legs.

"How can I contend, my friend, Alexyéi Dmítritch!—Good gracious! But setting all that aside . . . . . I repeat: I am heartily glad of thine acquaintance with Mr. Sipyágin—and I even foresee great benefit from that acquaintance—for our affair. Thou wilt get into the higher circles! Thou wilt see those 'lionesses,' those women with bodies of velvet on steel springs, as it is expressed in 'Letters from Spain'; study them, brother, study them! If thou wert an epicurean, I should even be apprehensive on thy account . . . I really should!—But surely thou art not taking a position as tutor with that aim in view?"

"I am taking a position as tutor,"—put in Nezhdánoff,—"in order to avoid starvation . . . And in order to get away from all of you for a time,"—he added to himself.

"Well, of course! of course!—Therefore, I say to thee: study! But what an odour that gentleman has left behind him!" Pákhlin elevated

his nose in the air.—"That's it, the genuine 'ambray' of which the lady's-maid in 'The Inspector' dreamed!"

"He questioned Prince G. . . about me,"—said Nezhdánoff, in a dull tone, again huddling himself in the window:—"my entire history must be known to him, by this time."

"Not 'must be,' but—certainly is! What of that?—I 'll bet you, that that is the very reason why he took it into his head to engage thee as teacher. Say what thou wilt, thou art certainly an aristocrat thyself—by blood. Well, and that is as much as to say: thine own master! But I have stayed too long with thee; it is high time I went to my office, to the exploiters!—Farewell for the present, brother!" .

Pákhlin started for the door, but halted, and turned back.

"Hearken, Alyósha,"—he said, in an insinuating tone:—"a while ago, thou didst refuse me,—now thou wilt have money of thine own, I know, but nevertheless, allow me to contribute at least a trifle to the general cause!—I can aid in no other way, than through my pocket! See here: I place a ten-ruble note on the table! Is it accepted?"

Nezhdánoff made no reply, and did not move.

"Silence gives consent! Thanks!"—cried Pákhlin merrily, and vanished.

Nezhdánoff was left alone. . . . . He con-

tinued to stare through the window-pane at the gloomy, contracted courtyard, into which the rays even of the summer sun did not fall, and his face was gloomy also.

Nezhdánoff was born, as we already know, of Prince G., wealthy, an Imperial-Adjutant, and his daughter's governess, a pretty little graduate from a Government Institute school, who died on the day she gave him birth. Nezhdánoff had received his first education in the boarding-school of a Swiss, an active, severe pedagogue, and then he had entered the University. He himself had desired to become a jurist:—but the general, his father, who hated the nihilists, had set him at work "on æsthetics," as Nezhdánoff expressed it, with a bitter smile, that is to say, in the historico-philological course. Nezhdánoff's father saw him at most three or four times a year, but he took an interest in his fate—and, when he died, bequeathed him—"in memory of Nástenka" (his mother)—a capital of six thousand rubles, the interest on which, under the title of "pension," was paid to him by his brothers, the Princes G.—It was not for nothing that Pákhlin had called him an aristocrat; everything about him betrayed his high breeding: his small ears, hands, feet, his rather small but delicate features, his soft skin, his soft, abundant hair, his very voice, which was rather lisping but agreeable. He was frightfully nervous, frightfully egotis-

tical, impressionable, and even capricious; the false position, in which he had been placed from his very childhood, had developed in him quickness to take offence, and irritability; but innate magnanimity did not permit of his becoming suspicious and distrustful.—That same false position of Nezhdánoff also explains the contradictions which contended in his being. Neat to spruceness, squeamish to fastidiousness, he strove to be cynical, and coarse in language; an idealist by nature, passionate and chaste, bold and timid at one and the same time, he was ashamed, as of a disgraceful vice, both of his passion and his chastity, and regarded it as his duty to jeer at ideals. He had a tender heart, and avoided people; he easily flew into a rage—and never cherished rancour. He was indignant with his father, because the latter had set him to work "at æsthetics": he openly, in the sight of all men, busied himself exclusively with political and socialistic problems, professed the most extreme opinions—(in him, they were not mere phrases!)—and secretly enjoyed art, poetry, beauty in all its manifestations . . . . he even wrote verses himself. He carefully hid the notebook, in which he had transcribed them—and among his Petersburg friends, Pákhlin alone, and that owing to his fine scent, suspected its existence. Nothing so offended, so insulted Nezhdánoff, as the slightest allusion to his verse-

writing, to this, as he regarded it, his unpardonable weakness. Thanks to his Swiss teacher, he knew a multitude of facts, and was not afraid of toil; he even liked to work in a somewhat feverish and inconsequent manner, to tell the truth.—His comrades loved him . . . they were attracted by his inward uprightness and kindliness and purity; but Nezhdánoff had not been born under a lucky star; he did not find life easy.

He himself was profoundly conscious of this—and he recognised that he was solitary, despite the attachment of his friends.

He continued to stand in front of the window—and reflected sadly and painfully about his impending journey, about the new, unexpected crisis in his fate. . . . He did not regret Petersburg; he was not leaving behind him there anything especially dear to him; moreover, he knew that he was to return in the autumn. And, nevertheless, he was beset with irresolution; he experienced an involuntary dejection.

"What sort of a teacher am I?" flashed through his mind; —"what sort of a pedagogue?"—He was ready to reproach himself for having accepted the duties of an instructor. Nevertheless, such a reproach would have been unjust.—Nezhdánoff possessed sufficient knowledge—and, in spite of his uneven temper, children came to him without constraint—and he himself easily became attached to them. The

melancholy which had seized upon Nezhdánoff was that sensation peculiar to every change of place—a sensation which is experienced by all persons of melancholy temperament, all meditative people; it is not known to persons of dashing, sanguine character; they are, rather, ready to rejoice when the every-day course of life is broken, when its habitual surroundings are changed. Nezhdánoff became engrossed in his thoughts to such a degree that gradually, unconsciously, he began to put them into words; the emotions which were fermenting within him were already ranging themselves in measured cadence. . . . .

"Phew! the devil!" he cried aloud.—"Apparently, I am on the verge of composing verses!"—He gave a start, and retreated from the window; catching sight of Pákhlin's ten-ruble note, which lay on the table, he stuffed it into his pocket, and set to striding up and down the room.

"I must take some earnest-money,"—he argued with himself . . . "seeing that the gentleman offers it.—One hundred rubles . . . and from my brothers—from their Serenities,—one hundred rubles. . . . . Fifty for my debt, fifty or seventy for the journey . . . . and the rest can go to Ostrodúmoff. And here, too, what Pákhlin has given, he can have that also. . . . ."

While he was casting up these accounts in his

head—the former rhymes began again to stir within him. He paused, meditated . . . . and, turning his eyes to one side, he became rooted to the spot. . . . . Then his hands, as though guided by the sense of feeling, sought and opened the drawer of his table, drew forth from its very innermost depths a closely-written note-book. . . . . .

He dropped into a chair, still never altering the direction of his gaze, took a pen, and purring to himself, now and then tossing back his hair, erasing, blotting, he began to jot down line after line. . . . .

The door of the anteroom was opened half-way—and Miss Mashúrin's head made its appearance. Nezhdánoff did not notice it, and went on with his work. Miss Mashúrin stared long and intently at him—and, shaking her head to right and left, beat a retreat. . . . But Nezhdánoff suddenly straightened himself up, glanced round, and saying, with vexation:

"Ah! You!"—flung the note-book into the table-drawer.

Then Miss Mashúrin entered the room, with a firm tread.

"Ostrodúmoff has sent me to you,"—she said, hesitatingly,—"in order to find out when he can have the money.—If you obtain it to-day, we will set out this evening."

"It is impossible to get it to-day,"—rejoined

Nezhdánoff, and knit his brows:—"come to-morrow."

"At what time?"

"At two o'clock."

"Very well."

Miss Mashúrin said nothing for a while, then suddenly offered her hand to Nezhdánoff. . . .

"I seem to have disturbed you; pardon me. And besides . . . . I am going away. Who knows whether we shall see each other again? I wished to bid you farewell."

Nezhdánoff pressed her red, cold fingers.

"You saw that gentleman here?"—he began.—"He and I have come to terms. I am going with him as tutor. His estate is in the Government of S., near S. itself."

A joyful smile flashed over Miss Mashúrin's face.

"Near S.! Then, perhaps, we shall see each other again. Perhaps we shall be sent thither."—Miss Mashúrin sighed.—"Akh, Alexyéi Dmítritch. . . . . ."

"What?"—asked Nezhdánoff.

Miss Mashúrin assumed a concentrated mien.

"Never mind.—Farewell! It is nothing."

Again she pressed Nezhdánoff's hand firmly, and withdrew.

"There is no other person in all Petersburg, who is so attached to me as that . . . . . queer woman!" thought Nezhdánoff to himself. "But

why on earth did she disturb me? . . However, it is all for the best!"

On the morning of the following day, Nezhdánoff betook himself to Sipyágin's city residence, and there, in a magnificent study, filled with furniture of a severe style, which fully accorded with the dignity of a liberal statesman and gentleman, seated in front of a huge desk, on which, in stately order, lay documents of no use whatever, along with gigantic paper-knives of ivory, which had never cut anything,—he, for the space of a whole hour, listened to the free-thinking host, was drenched with the oil of his wise, affable, gracious speeches, received, at last, one hundred rubles as earnest-money, and, ten days later, that same Nezhdánoff, half-reclining on a velvet divan, in a special compartment of a first-class railway carriage, side by side with that same wise, liberal statesman and gentleman, was whirling on toward Moscow over the jolting rails of the Nicholas railway.

## V

In the drawing-room of a large stone house, with columns and a Grecian façade, built in the twenties of the nineteenth century, by the well-known agriculturist and "Danteist,"[1] Sipyágin's father, his wife, Valentína Mikhaílovna, a very handsome lady, was every moment expecting the arrival of her husband, which had been announced by a telegram.—The furnishing of the drawing-room bore the imprint of the newest, most delicate taste; everything in it was pretty and pleasing, everything, from the agreeable variety of the cretonne coverings and draperies to the diversified outlines of the porcelain, bronze, and crystal trifles scattered about on the étagères and tables, everything stood out softly and harmoniously, and mingled with the merry rays of the May day, which streamed freely through the windows that had been set ajar. The air of the drawing-room, permeated with the fragrance of lilies-of-the-valley (large bouquets of those wondrously-beautiful spring flowers gleamed white here and there)—barely stirred, now and then agitated by the entrance of

[1] The epithet applied to the landed proprietors who (before the Emancipation) were accustomed to torture their serfs.—Translator.

a light breeze, which circled softly over the superbly laid-out garden.

A charming picture! And the mistress of the house, Valentína Mikhaílovna Sipyágin, completed the picture, imparted to it sense and life. She was a woman of lofty stature, thirty years of age, with dark chestnut hair, with a dark but fresh face of uniform hue, which reminded one of the countenance of the Sistine Madonna, and wonderful, deep, velvety eyes.—Her lips were rather broad and pale, her shoulders rather high, her hands rather large. . . . . But, in spite of all this, any one who had beheld her, as she moved freely and gracefully about the drawing-room, now bending over the flowers her slender, slightly laced figure, and inhaling their odour with a smile, now altering the position of some Chinese vase, now swiftly adjusting, in front of the mirror, her shining hair, and slightly narrowing her marvellous eyes,—any one, we say, would have exclaimed, to himself or even aloud, that he had never encountered so bewitching a creature!

A pretty, curly-haired little boy, nine years of age, in a Scottish costume, with his little legs bare, lavishly pomaded and curled, ran headlong into the drawing-room, and came to a sudden halt at the sight of Valentína Mikhaílovna.

"What dost thou want, Kólya?"—she asked.—Her voice was as soft and velvety as her eyes.

"This is what I want, mamma,"—began the

little boy, with embarrassment,—" aunty sent me here . . . . she ordered me to bring her some lilies-of-the-valley . . . . for her room . . . she has none. . . . "

Valentína Mikhaílovna took her little son by the chin, and raised his pomaded head.

" Tell aunty, that she must send to the gardener for lilies-of-the-valley;—but these lilies belong to me. . . I do not wish to have them touched. Tell her, that I do not like to have my rules broken. Wilt thou be able to repeat my words? "

" Yes," . . . . whispered the boy.

" Come, now—say them over."

" I shall say . . . . I shall say . . . that thou wilt not let her."

Valentína Mikhaílovna broke into a laugh.—And her laugh, also, was soft.

" I perceive that one cannot yet intrust any commissions to thee. Well, it makes no difference, say whatever comes into thy head."

The little boy bestowed a swift kiss on his mother's hand, all adorned with rings, and flew headlong thence.

Valentína Mikhaílovna followed him with her eyes, sighed, approached a cage of gilded wire, along whose walls, cautiously clutching with beak and claws, a small green parrakeet was climbing, and teased him with the tip of her finger; then she sank down on a small, low couch,

and taking from a small, round, carved table, the last number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,—she began to turn over the leaves.

A respectful cough made her look up. On the threshold of the door, stood a comely footman, in a livery coat, and white necktie.

"What dost thou want,—Agafón?" inquired Valentína Mikhaílovna, in the same soft voice as before.

"Semyón Petróvitch Kallomyeítzeff has arrived, madam. Will you receive him?"

"Ask him in; ask him in, of course.—And tell them to request Marianna Vikéntievna to come to the drawing-room."

Valentína Mikhaílovna flung the number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on the table,—and, leaning against the back of the divan—rolled her eyes upward, and fell into meditation,—which was very becoming to her.

From the manner alone in which Semyón Petróvitch Kallomyeítzeff, a young man, two and thirty years of age, entered the room,—unconstrainedly, carelessly and wearily,—from the fact that, of a sudden, his face brightened up pleasantly, and he made his bow, a little to one side, and from the elastic manner in which he drew himself up afterward, from the manner in which he talked, not exactly through his nose, and yet not quite sweetly,—from the respectful way in which he took, the impressive way in

which he kissed, Valentína Mikhaílovna's hand,—any one could have divined, that the newly-arrived visitor was not a resident of the rural districts, not a rural, accidental, although wealthy neighbour, but a genuine Petersburg "fashionable" of the highest circles.—Moreover, he was clad in the very best English fashion: the flowered tip of his white batiste handkerchief stuck out, in a tiny triangle, from the flat side-pocket of his variegated jacket; from a rather broad black ribbon dangled a monocle; the dead-white hue of his suède gloves corresponded with the dead-grey colouring of his checked trousers. Mr. Kallomyeítzeff's hair was closely cut, he was smoothly shaved; his somewhat feminine face, with its small eyes set close together, with its thin, hooked nose, and its plump, red lips, expressed the agreeable license of the highly-educated nobleman. It exhaled courtesy . . . and very easily became malicious, even harsh; all that was required was that some one or something should vex Semyón Petróvitch, should wound his conservative, patriotic and religious principles,—oh! then he became pitiless! All his elegance instantaneously evaporated:—his tender eyes lighted up with an evil flame:—his handsome little mouth emitted ugly words—and appealed—with a shriek appealed to the authorities!

Semyón Petróvitch's family was descended from plain market-gardeners. His great-grand-

father had been called, after the place of his extraction: Koloméntzoff. . . But his grandfather had changed himself into Koloméitzeff; his father had written it: Kalloméitzeff, and finally, Semyón Petróvitch, had inserted the character *ye* in the place of *e,* and seriously regarded himself as a pure-blooded aristocrat; he was even wont to hint, that their family was really descended from the Barons Gallemeyer, one of whom had been an Austrian field-marshal in the Thirty Years' War. Semyón Petróvitch served in the Ministry of the Court, had the post of Junior Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber; patriotism prevented his entering the diplomatic career, where, it appeared, he was constantly being summoned; and his education, his habit of society, his success with women, and his very appearance . . . *mais quitter la Russie?—jamais!* —Kallomyeítzeff possessed a fine property, had influential connections; he bore the reputation of a trustworthy and devoted man—"*un peu trop . . . féodal dans ses opinions,*" as the well-known Prince B., one of the lights of the Petersburg official world, expressed himself with regard to him. Kallomyeítzeff had come to the Government of S. . . . on a two months' leave of absence, in order to attend to matters on his estate—that is, "to frighten some, to crush down others." —For it is impossible to dispense with that!

"I supposed that I should find Borís Andréitch

here,"—he began, shifting amiably from one foot to the other, and suddenly glancing aside, in imitation of a very important personage.

Valentína Mikhaílovna slightly knit her brows:

"Otherwise you would not have come?"

Kallomyeítzeff fairly flung himself backward, so unjust did Madame Sipyágin's question appear to him, and so absolutely absurd!

"Valentína Mikhaílovna!"—he exclaimed,—"upon my word, is it possible to suspect . . . ."

"Very well, very well, sit down; Borís Andréitch will be here directly. I have sent the calash to the station for him. Wait a little. . . . You will see him. What time is it now?"

"Half-past two,"—replied Kallomyeítzeff, drawing from his waistcoat pocket a large gold watch, adorned with enamel. He showed it to Madame Sipyágin.—"Have you seen my watch? It was given to me by Mikhaíl, you know . . . . the Servian Prince . . . . Obrenóvitch. Here is his monogram,—look at it. He and I are great friends. We have hunted together. He 's a splendid young fellow! And he has a hand of iron, as a ruler should have. Oh, he is not fond of jesting! No-oo-oo!"

Kallomyeítzeff dropped into an arm-chair, crossed his legs, and began slowly to pull off his left glove.

"We ought to have that sort of a Mikhaíl here, in our government."

"Why so? Are you discontented with anything?"

Kallomyeítzeff wrinkled up his nose.

"It 's that county council, as usual! That county council! Where 's the use of it? It only weakens the administration, and arouses .... unnecessary ideas. . ." (Kallomyeítzeff dangled his left hand, freed from the oppression of its glove, in the air.) "I have spoken about that in Petersburg .... *mais, bah!* The wind was not setting in that direction. Even your husband .... imagine! However, he is well known as a liberal."

Madame Sipyágin straightened herself up on her little divan.

"What? And you, Mr. Kallomyeítzeff, do you offer opposition to the government?"

"I? Opposition? Never! Not on any terms! *Mais j'ai mon franc parler.* I sometimes criticise, but I always submit!"

"It is precisely the opposite with me! I do not criticise, and I do not submit."

"*Ah! mais, c'est un mot!* With your permission, I will communicate your remark to my friend Ladislas; *vous savez,* he is making preparations to write a romance of high life, and he has already read me several chapters. It will be charming! *Nous aurons enfin le grand monde russe peint par lui-même.*"

"Where is it to appear?"

"In the *Russian Messenger*, of course. That is our *Revue des Deux Mondes*. I see that you read it."

"Yes; but do you know, it is becoming very stupid."

"Possibly . . . . possibly . . . . And the *Russian Messenger* also, if you like, for some time past—to speak in the current jargon—has been getting a wee bit groggy of late."

Kallomyeítzeff laughed at the top of his voice; it struck him as very amusing to say "has been getting groggy," and "a wee bit."—"*Mais, c'est un journal qui se respecte!*"—he went on,—"and that is the principal thing. I must inform you that I . . . take very little interest in Russian literature; a lot of plebeians are cutting a figure in it nowadays. Things have come to such a pass, that the heroine of a romance is—a plain cook, *parole d'honneur!* But I shall read Ladislas's romance, without fail. *Il y aura le petit mot pour rire* . . . . and its tendency! its tendency. The nihilists will be put to shame—my guarantee for that is Ladislas's turn of mind—*qui est très correct.*"

"But not his past,"—remarked Madame Sipyágin.

"*Ah! jetons un voile sur les erreurs de sa jeunesse!*"—exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, and drew off his right glove.

Again Madame Sipyágin frowned slightly. She coquetted a little with her wonderful eyes.

"Semyón Petróvitch,"—she said,—"allow me to ask you, why, when you are talking Russian, do you use so many French words? It seems to me that . . . pardon me . . . that is an old-fashioned style."

"Why? why? Not every one possesses as capital a command of his native tongue as you do. As for myself, I recognise the Russian language as the language of decrees and governmental ordinances; I prize its purity! I bow down before Karamzín! . . . But Russian, the every-day language, so to speak . . . Does it exist? Now, for example, how would you have translated my exclamation—*de tout à l'heure: 'C'est un mot!'* That is a word! . . . Good heavens!"

"I would have said: 'that is a happy word.'"

Kallomyeítzeff burst out laughing.

"'A happy word!' Valentína Mikhaílovna! But is it possible that you do not feel that that . . . . instantly reeks of the theological seminary? . . . . All the salt has vanished. . . ."

"Well, you will not be able to convince me. But where is that Marianna?"—She rang the bell; a page entered.

"I gave orders that Marianna Vikéntievna should be requested to come to the drawing-room. Has she not been informed?"

Before the page could reply, there made her appearance, behind his back, on the threshold of the door, a young girl in a full, dark morning-gown, with her hair cut in a round crop—Marianna Vikéntievna Sinétzky, Madame Sipyágin's niece on the mother's side.

## VI

"PARDON me, Valentína Mikhaílovna,"—she said, approaching Madame Sipyágin,—"I was busy, and lingered too long."

Then she bowed to Kallomyeítzeff, and, withdrawing to one side, she seated herself on a small tabouret, near the parrakeet, which, as soon as it caught sight of her, began to flap its wings and stretch out its neck toward her.

"Why hast thou seated thyself so far away, Marianna?"—remarked Madame Sipyágin, as she followed her with her eyes to the tabouret.—"Dost thou wish to be nearer to thy little friend? Just imagine, Semyón Petróvitch,"—she turned to Kallomyeítzeff,—"that parrot is simply in love with our Marianna. . . . ."

"That does not surprise me!"

"And it cannot endure me."

"That is astonishing! It must be that you tease it."

"Never; quite the contrary. I feed it with sugar. Only it will take nothing from my hands. No . . . it is sympathy . . . and antipathy. . ."

Marianna cast a sidelong glance at Madame Sipyágin . . . and Madame Sipyágin cast a glance at her.

These two women did not love each other.

In comparison with her aunt, Marianna might have been called almost "an ugly girl." She had a round face, a large, aquiline nose, grey eyes, which also were large, and very bright, slender brows, thin lips. She cut her chestnut hair short, and had an unsociable air. But from her whole being there emanated a strong and daring, impetuous and passionate element. Her hands and feet were tiny; her sturdily and supple little body reminded one of the Florentine statuettes of the sixteenth century; she walked gracefully and lightly.

Miss Sinétzky's position in Madame Sipyágin's house was decidedly a painful one. Her father, a very clever and energetic man, of semi-Polish extraction, had attained to the rank of General in the service, but had suddenly come to grief, having been detected in a huge theft from the government funds; he had been tried . . condemned, deprived of his rank and his nobility, and banished to Siberia. Then he had been pardoned . . and brought back; but he did not succeed in climbing up again, and died in extreme poverty. His wife, Sipyágin's own sister, the mother of Marianna (there were no children except herself), had not been able to bear up against the blow which had laid waste all her prosperity, and had died shortly after her husband. Uncle Sipyágin had given Marianna

an asylum in his own house.—But she loathed living the life of a dependent; she longed for freedom, with all the force of her unyielding soul—and an incessant, though concealed conflict, seethed between her and her aunt. Madame Sipyágin regarded her as a nihilist and an atheist; on her side, Marianna hated Madame Sipyágin as her involuntary oppressor. She shunned her uncle, as she did every one else.—She shunned them,—that is precisely the word,—she did not fear them; she had not a timid nature.

"Antipathy,"—repeated Kallomyeítzeff,—"yes, that is a strange thing. Everybody knows, for example, that I am a profoundly religious man, an Orthodox, in the fullest sense of the word; but I cannot look at a priest's plait of hair, or his long locks, with equanimity; something begins fairly to boil up within me, fairly to boil up."

Thereupon, Kallomyeítzeff, raising his clenched fist a couple of times, even demonstrated how his feelings seethed in his breast.

"Hair, in general, seems to annoy you, Semyón Petróvitch,"—remarked Marianna:—"I am convinced that you cannot look on with equanimity, either, when any one wears it cut short, as I do."

Madame Sipyágin slowly elevated her eyebrows and bent her head, as though amazed at the freedom of manner, wherewith the young girls of the present day enter into the conversa-

tion,—and Kallomyeítzeff displayed his teeth in a condescending smile.

"Of course,"—he remarked,—"I cannot but regret those lovely curls, like yours, Marianna Vikéntievna, which fall under the pitiless blades of the shears; but there is no antipathy in me; and, in any case . . . . your example might . . . . might . . . convert me!"

Kallomyeítzeff could not hit upon the Russian word,—and he did not care to speak in French, after his hostess's remark,—so he said "convertírovat."

"Thank God, Marianna does not yet wear eye-glasses,"—Madame Sipyágin joined in,—"and she has not yet parted with her collars and cuffs:—on the other hand, she occupies herself with the natural sciences, to my sincere regret; and she takes an interest in the question of Woman . . . that is true, is it not, Marianna?"

All this was said with the object of confusing Marianna; but she did not become confused.

"Yes, aunty,"—she replied,—"I read everything that is written on that subject; I try to understand in what that question consists."

"That 's what it is to be young!"—Madame Sipyágin addressed herself to Kallomyeítzeff:—"now, you and I do not busy ourselves with that, do we?—hey?"

Kallomyeítzeff smiled sympathetically; one must, of course, keep up the jest of an amiable lady.

"Marianna Vikéntievna,"—he began,—"is still full of that idealism . . . . that romanticism of youth . . . . which . . . . in the course of time . . . . ."

"However, I am maligning myself,"—Madame Sipyágin interrupted him:—"Those questions interest me also. For I am not so very old yet."

"And I, also, take an interest in all that,"—hastily exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff:—"only, I would prohibit discussion on that point!"

"You would prohibit discussion on that point?"—Marianna asked.

"Yes!—I would say to the public:—'I do not hinder your taking an interest . . but talk . . . sshhhhh!'"—He raised his finger to his lips.—"In any case, I would prohibit discussion *in print!*—unconditionally!"

Madame Sipyágin laughed.

"Well? Don't you think that a commission should be appointed by the Ministry to settle that question?"

"A commission would answer very well. Do you think that we would settle the question any worse than all those starveling quill-drivers, who can see nothing beyond the end of their own noses, and imagine that they are . . . first-class

geniuses?—We would appoint Borís Andréitch chairman."

Madame Sipyágin laughed more heartily than ever.

"Look out, have a care; Borís Andréitch is sometimes a Jacobin. . . ."

"Jacot, jacot, jacot!" chattered the parrot.

Valentína Mikhaílovna shook her handkerchief at it.

"Don't prevent intelligent people from talking! . . . Marianna, make it stop."

Marianna turned to the cage, and began with her finger-nail to scratch the parrot's neck, which it immediately stretched out to her.

"Yes,"—pursued Madame Sipyágin,—"Borís Andréitch sometimes amazes even me. He has a touch, . . . a touch . . . of the tribune, about him."

"*C'est parce qu'il est orateur!*"—hotly put in Kallomyeítzeff, in French.—"Your husband possesses the gift of eloquence beyond all others, and he has become accustomed to dazzle . . . . *ses propres paroles le grisent* . . . . and, in addition, there is the desire for popularity . . . . However, he is somewhat in a bad humour, is he not? *Il boude? Eh?*"

Madame Sipyágin turned her eyes on Marianna.

"I have noticed nothing of the sort,"—she said, after a brief pause.

"Yes,"—went on Kallomyeítzeff, in a meditative tone,—"he was rather passed over at Easter."[1]

Again Madame Sipyágin directed his attention to Marianna, with her eyes.

Kallomyeítzeff smiled and screwed up his eyes, as much as to say:—"I understand."

"Marianna Vikéntievna!"—he suddenly exclaimed, in an unnecessarily loud tone;—"do you intend to give lessons in the school again this year?"

Marianna turned away from the cage.

"And do you take an interest in *that?* Semyón Petróvitch?"

"Of course; I even take a very great interest in it."

"You would not prohibit *that?*"

"I would prohibit the nihilists even thinking of schools; but, under the guidance of the priesthood, and with proper supervision over the priesthood,—I would establish them myself!"

"Would you really! Well, I do not know what I shall do this year. Everything went so badly last year.—And what is the school in summer, anyway?"

When Marianna spoke she gradually flushed, as though her speech cost her an effort, as though

[1] That is, received no promotion or order—or something less than his expectations.—TRANSLATOR.

she were forcing herself to go on with it. She had a great deal of pride.

"Thou art not sufficiently prepared?"—inquired Madame Sipyágin, with an ironical tremor in her voice.

"Possibly."

"What!"—exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, again.—"What do I hear! O ye gods! In order to teach little peasant girls their *a b c's*, training is requisite?"

But at that moment Kólya rushed into the drawing-room with a shout: "Mamma! mamma! papa is coming!" and behind him, waddling on her fat legs, a grey-haired woman in a mob cap and a yellow shawl made her appearance—and also announced that Bórinka would be there directly.

This lady was Sipyágin's aunt, Anna Zakhárovna by name.—All the persons in the drawing-room sprang from their seats, and hastened into the anteroom, and thence ran down the steps upon the principal porch. A long avenue of clipped fir-trees led from the highway straight to this porch: along it an open carriage, drawn by four horses, was already rolling.—Valentína Mikhaílovna, who stood in advance of the rest, waved her handkerchief. Kólya screamed shrilly; the coachman adroitly drew up the smoking horses, the footman flew head over heels from the box, and came near tearing the carriage-door out

with its hinges and lock—and then, with a gracious smile on his lips, in his eyes, over all his face, flinging off his cloak with a dexterous movement of the shoulders, Borís Andréitch alighted on the ground. Valentína Mikhaílovna flung her arms around his neck gracefully and swiftly—and they exchanged three kisses. Kólya danced up and down, and tugged at the tails of his father's coat from behind . . . . but the latter first kissed Anna Zakhárovna, having preliminarily removed his extremely uncomfortable and hideous Scotch travelling cap from his head; then he exchanged greetings with Marianna and Kallomyeítzeff, who had also come out on the porch—(to Kallomyeítzeff he gave a hearty English handshake, "pump-handle fashion"—as though he were ringing a bell)—and only then did he turn to his son; he shook him under the armpits, lifted him up, and held him close to his face.

While all this was taking place, Nezhdánoff crawled quietly, and like a culprit, out of the carriage, and stopped short beside the front wheel, without taking off his hat, and casting sidelong glances. . . . . Valentína Mikhaílovna, having embraced her husband, darted a keen glance over his shoulder at this new figure;—Sipyágin had informed her that he would bring a tutor with him.

Continuing to exchange greetings and hand-

clasps, the whole party moved up the steps, along both sides of which the men and maid-servants were ranged in rows.—They did not approach to kiss their master's hand—that "Asiatic custom" had long since been done away with—and merely bowed respectfully; but Sipyágin replied to their bows more with his brows and his nose than with his head.

Nezhdánoff also made his way up the broad steps. As soon as he entered the anteroom, Sipyágin, who had already been seeking him with his eyes, introduced him to his wife, to Anna Zakhárovna, and to Marianna; but to Kólya he said: "This is thy teacher, I beg that thou wilt be obedient to him! Give him thy hand!"—Kólya timidly offered his hand to Nezhdánoff, then riveted his eyes on him; but evidently, not finding in him anything particular or agreeable, he again seized hold of his "papa."—Nezhdánoff felt awkward, exactly as he had in the theatre. He wore an old, decidedly unsightly overcoat; the dust of the road had settled all over his face and hands.—Valentína Mikhaílovna said something pleasant to him; but he did not clearly distinguish her words, and made no reply, merely noticing, that she gazed at her husband with peculiar brilliancy, and pressed close to him. —He was displeased by Kólya's curled and pomaded locks; at the sight of Kallomyeítzeff he thought: "What a smoothly-licked phiz!"—and

to the other persons he paid no attention whatever. Sipyágin turned his head around with dignity, a couple of times, as though taking a survey of his penates, during which operation, his long, pendulous side-whiskers and his thick, small nape stood out with special distinctness.—Then, in a strong, luscious voice, which had not been rendered in the least hoarse by the journey, he called to one of the lackeys: "Iván! Conduct Mr. Teacher to the green chamber, and carry his trunk up there also"—and he announced to Nezhdánoff, that he might now rest and get unpacked and cleaned up—and that dinner was served in their house promptly at five o'clock. Nezhdánoff bowed, and followed Iván to the "green" room, which was situated in the second story.

The whole company went into the drawing-room. There the greetings were repeated once more;—the half-blind old nurse made her appearance with a reverence. Out of respect to her age, Sipyágin allowed her to kiss his hand, and excusing himself to Kallomyeítzeff, withdrew into his bedroom, accompanied by his wife.

## VII

THE clean and spacious chamber, to which the servant conducted Nezhdánoff, had windows which gave upon the garden. They were open, and a light breeze was gently puffing out the white shades: they bellied out like sails rising and then falling again. Athwart the ceiling golden reflections slipped softly: a spring-like fresh, and rather dampodour filled the whole room. —Nezhdánoff began by dismissing the servant, unpacking his things from his trunk, washing and dressing himself. The journey had exhausted him; the constant presence, for two whole days, of a strange man,—with whom he had talked a great deal, on various subjects, and fruitlessly,—had irritated his nerves: something bitter, which was not exactly tedium, nor yet exactly malice, had secretly made its way to the very depths of his being; he was enraged at his faint-heartedness —but still his heart ached.

He went to the window, and began to gaze into the garden. It was one of the black-loam gardens of our great-grandfathers, such as are not to be seen this side of Moscow.—Laid out on the long slope of a steep hill, it consisted of four

clearly-defined sections. In front of the house, for a couple of hundred paces, extended a flower-garden, with straight, sanded paths, clumps of acacias and lilacs, and circular "flower-plots"; on the left, running past the stable-yard, to the very threshing-floor, stretched the fruit-orchard, thickly planted with apple-, pear-, and plum-trees, currant-bushes and raspberry-bushes; directly opposite the house, in a huge, dense square, rose intersecting linden alleys. On the right, the view was bounded by the highway, screened by a double row of silvery poplars; from behind the cluster of weeping birches the steep roof of a hot-house was visible. The whole garden was clothed with the tender verdure of the first beauty of the spring blossoming forth; the powerful summer humming of the insects was not yet to be heard; the young leaves were lisping,—and finches were singing somewhere about, and a couple of turtle-doves kept cooing always on the same tree, while a cuckoo was uttering its note, and changing its place every time; and far away, from beyond the mill-pond, there was wafted the vehement croaking of the daws, resembling the creaking of a multitude of cart-wheels. And over all this young, solitary, quiet life floated the bright clouds, swelling out their breasts like huge, lazy birds.—Nezhdánoff gazed and listened, inhaling the air through his parted, chilled lips. . . .

And he seemed to feel more at ease; silence descended upon him also.

And, in the meantime, down-stairs, a conversation was in progress about him. Sipyágin was telling his wife how he had made his acquaintance, and what Prince G. had said to him, and what conversations they had indulged in during the journey.

"A clever head!"—he repeated,—"and with knowledge; he is handsome, it is true, but thou knowest that that counts for nothing with me; at all events, those people have ambition. Yes, and Kólya is too young; he will not acquire any folly from him."

Valentína Mikhaílovna listened to her husband with an affectionate and, at the same time, a sneering smile, as though he were making confession to her of a rather strange but amusing prank; she even seemed to find it pleasant that her "*seigneur et maître,*" so steady a man and so important an official, was still capable of suddenly taking and playing a prank, just as though he had been twenty years of age. As he stood before the mirror, in a snow-white shirt and sky-blue suspenders, Sipyágin began to brush his hair in the English fashion, with two brushes;—and Valentína Mikhaílovna, tucking her feet up under her on the low Turkish divan, began to impart to him a variety of information concerning the household management, the paper fac-

tory, which, alas! was not thriving as it should, about the cook, who must be changed, about the church, whose plaster had tumbled down, about Marianna, about Kallomyeítzeff. . . .

Unfeigned confidence and concord reigned between the married pair; they actually lived "in love and concord," as the expression used to run in the olden days; and when Sipyágin, having completed his toilet, gallantly asked Valentína Mikhaílovna for her "little hand," when she gave him both hands, and looked on with tender pride, as he kissed them alternately,—the feeling which was expressed on the countenances of both was a good and upright feeling, although in her case it shone in eyes worthy of Raphael, and in his in the plain "peepers" of a general.

Precisely at five o'clock Nezhdánoff went down-stairs to dinner, apprised not even by the sound of a bell, but by the prolonged roar of a Chinese gong. The whole company was already assembled in the dining-room. Sipyágin again greeted him from the heights of his neck-cloth, and pointed out his place at table, between Anna Zakhárovna and Kólya. Anna Zakhárovna was a very aged spinster, the sister of the deceased Sipyágin, senior; she emitted an odour of camphor, like a garment which has long been packed away, and she had an uneasy and dejected aspect. She fulfilled in the house the office of Kólya's valet, or governor; her wrinkled face expressed

discontent when Nezhdánoff was seated between her and her nursling. Kólya cast a sidelong glance at his new neighbour; the clever boy speedily divined that the teacher felt awkward, that he was confused; and the latter never raised his eyes, and ate almost nothing. This pleased Kólya; up to that moment, he had been afraid that the teacher would turn out stern and irascible. Valentína Mikhaílovna also glanced, from time to time, at Nezhdánoff.

"He looks like a student,"—she said to herself, —"and he has not lived in society; but he has an interesting face, and hair of an original colour, like that of the apostle whom the old Italian masters always painted as red-haired,—and clean hands." However, all the people at the table looked at Nezhdánoff, and were considerate of him, so to speak, leaving him in peace, at the outset; he was conscious of this, and was gratified at it, and, at the same time, for some reason or other, it made him angry. The conversation at table was conducted by Kallomyeítzeff and Sipyágin. The discussion turned on the county council, the Governor, the peasants' obligation to furnish posting-horses, the land-redemption agreements, mutual acquaintances in Petersburg and Moscow, the Lyceum of Mr. Katkóff, which had just entered into operation, the difficulty of obtaining labourers, fines and damages to grain-fields by grazing cattle, and also about Bismarck,

about the war of '66, and about Napoleon III, whom Kallomyeítzeff pronounced to be a gallant fellow. The young Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber expressed extremely retrograde opinions: he talked so much that, at last, he quoted —jestingly, it is true—the toast of a landed-proprietor of his acquaintance at a certain Name-day banquet: "I drink to the only principles which I recognise as valid," this excited squire had exclaimed: "to the knout and to Roederer!"

Valentína Mikhaílovna frowned, and remarked at this quotation—"*de très mauvais gout.*"—Sipyágin, on the contrary, expressed extremely liberal opinions; he politely and rather negligently confuted Kallomyeítzeff; he even mocked at him.

"Your alarms on the score of the emancipation, my dear Semyón Petróvitch,"—he said to him, among other things,—"remind me of a memorial which our most respected and most amiable Alexyéi Ivánitch Tverítinoff sent in 1860, and which he read everywhere in the Petersburg drawing-rooms. It contained one particularly fine phrase about how our emancipated peasant would infallibly march, torch in hand, over the face of the entire fatherland. You ought to have seen how our dearest Alexyéi Ivánitch, puffing out his little cheeks, and with his little eyes popping out of his head, uttered with his infantile mouth: 'a torch! a torch! he will march with a torch!'

Well, and the emancipation has been accomplished. . . . But where is the peasant with his torch?"

"Tverítinoff,"—retorted Kallomyeítzeff, in a gloomy tone,—"was mistaken only on this point, that it is not the peasants, but other people, who are going about with torches."

At these words Nezhdánoff, who up to that moment had hardly noticed Marianna,—she was sitting obliquely opposite him,—suddenly exchanged a glance with her, and immediately felt that they two, the sullen girl and himself, were of one mind and one stamp. She had made no impression whatever upon him when Sipyágin had introduced him to her; why had he now exchanged glances precisely with her? He immediately put the question to himself: Was it not shameful, was it not disgraceful to sit and listen to such opinions, and not to protest, and to give, by one's silence, occasion to think that one shared them? Nezhdánoff cast a second glance at Marianna, and it seemed to him that in her eyes he read the answer to his question: "Wait; the time has not yet come . . . it is not worth while . . . . later there will be plenty of opportunity. . . ."

It was pleasant to him to think that she understood him. Again he began to lend an ear to the conversation. . . . Valentína Mikhaílovna came to her husband's support, and expressed herself even more freely, in an even more radical manner

than he had done. She did not comprehend, "positively she did not com . . . pre . . . . hend," how a young and well-educated man could cling to such an antiquated routine!

"But,"—she added,—"I am convinced that you only say that for the sake of making a fine phrase. As for you, Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—she turned to Nezhdánoff with an amiable smile (he was inwardly amazed that she should be acquainted with his name and patronym),—"I know that you do not share the apprehensions of Semyón Petróvitch; Borís has communicated to me your conversations with him on the journey."

Nezhdánoff crimsoned, bent over his plate, and muttered something unintelligible: he was not exactly abashed, but he was not accustomed to bandying repartee with such brilliant personages. Madame Sipyágin continued to smile upon him; her husband graciously seconded her. . . On the other hand, Kallomyeítzeff, with much deliberation, stuck his round eye-glass between his eyebrow and his nose, and stared at the student who dared not state his "apprehensions."—But it was difficult to disconcert Nezhdánoff in that way; on the contrary: he immediately straightened himself up and stared, in his turn, at the fashionable official;—and just as suddenly as he had felt a comrade in Marianna, did he divine an enemy in Kallomyeítzeff! And Kallomyeítzeff divined it also; he dropped his little piece of glass, turned

away, and tried to turn it off with a laugh . . . but it was not a success; only Anna Zakhárovna, who secretly adored him, mentally stood on his side, and became still more enraged at her uninvited neighbour, who had separated her from Kólya.

Soon afterward the dinner came to an end. The company passed out on the terrace to drink coffee; Sipyágin and Kallomyeítzeff lighted cigars. Sipyágin offered a genuine regalia to Nezhdánoff, but the latter declined it.

"Akh! yes!"—exclaimed Sipyágin; "I had forgotten:—you smoke only cigarettes!"

"A strange taste,"—observed Kallomyeítzeff, between his teeth.

Nezhdánoff came near flying into a passion.—"I know the difference between a regalia and a cigarette very well, but I do not wish to lay myself under obligations,"—was on the point of bursting from his tongue. . . . He restrained himself; but he immediately set down this second piece of impertinence to the "debit" account of his enemy.

"Marianna!" said Madame Sipyágin suddenly, in a loud voice:—"do not stand on ceremony before the newcomer . . . light up thy little cigarette, for heaven's sake! The more so,"—she added, addressing Nezhdánoff,—"as I have heard, all the young ladies smoke in your sphere of society."

"Just so, madame," replied Nezhdánoff, drily. —This was the first word he had uttered to Madame Sipyágin.

"But I do not smoke,"—she went on, amiably narrowing her velvety eyes. . . "I am behind the times."

Marianna slowly and with much precision, as though with the object of enraging her aunt, drew out a dainty cigarette and a matchbox, and began to smoke. Nezhdánoff also ligthed a cigarette, borrowing a light from Marianna.

It was a wonderfully beautiful evening. Kólya went off into the garden with Anna Zakhárovna; the remainder of the party remained for about an hour longer on the terrace, enjoying the air. The conversation progressed in a tolerably lively manner. . . . Kallomyeítzeff made an attack on literature; in this direction, also, Sipyágin showed himself to be a liberal, defended its independence, demonstrated its value, even alluded to Chateaubriand, and to the fact that the Emperor Alexánder Pávlovitch had conferred upon him the Order of Saint Andrew the First-Called.[1] Nezhdánoff did not intermeddle in this controversy. Madame Sipyágin regarded him with an expression which seemed to indicate, on the one hand, that she approved his modest self-

[1] Usually conferred only upon male members of the Imperial Family, and on a few foreign rulers, almost exclusively royal.—TRANSLATOR.

restraint, and on the other hand—was a little surprised at it.

They all went into the drawing-room for tea.

"We have a very bad habit in our house, Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—said Sipyágin to Nezhdánoff: "in the evening we play cards, and a forbidden game at that . . . . slam,—just fancy!—I do not invite you . . . . but Marianna will be so good as to play something for us on the piano. For you are fond of music, I hope, are you not?" And, without waiting for an answer, Sipyágin took the pack of cards in his hand. Marianna seated herself at the piano and played, neither well nor badly, several of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words."—"*Charmant! Charmant! Quel touche!*" cried Kallomyeítzeff from a distance, as though scalded; but this exclamation was uttered chiefly out of politeness; and Nezhdánoff, despite the hope expressed by Sipyágin, had no liking whatever for music.

In the meantime, Sipyágin, with his wife, Kallomyeítzeff, and Anna Zakhárovna, sat down to play cards. . . Kólya came to say good-night, and having received his parents' blessing, and a big glass of milk instead of tea, went off to bed; his father shouted after him, that he was to begin his lessons with Alexyéi Dmítritch on the morrow. A little later, perceiving that Nezhdánoff was hanging about unoccupied in the middle of the room, and constrainedly turning over the leaves

of the photograph-album, Sipyágin told him not to stand on ceremony, but to go to his own room and rest, as he was probably fatigued with the journey; that the principal motto in their house was: liberty.

Nezhdánoff availed himself of the permission and, after making his bow to them all, he left the room; at the door he came face to face with Marianna, and on looking her once more in the eye, once more he became convinced that he and she would be good comrades, although she not only did not smile at him, but even contracted her brows.

He found his room completely filled with the fragrant freshness; the windows had stood open all day long. In the garden, directly opposite his windows, a nightingale was trilling softly and melodiously; the nocturnal sky beamed dim and warm with beauty above the crests of the linden-trees; the moon was on the verge of rising. Nezhdánoff lighted a candle; the grey nocturnal moths fairly showered in from the dark garden and made for the light, circling round, and coming into collision with one another, but the breeze blew them away, and made the bluish-yellow flame of the candle flicker.

"It is strange!" thought Nezhdánoff, as he got into bed. . . . "The master and mistress of the house are nice people, apparently, liberal, even humane; . . . . but I feel sad in my soul, somehow. An Imperial Chamberlain, . . . . a

Gentleman of the Emperor's Bedchamber. . . . Well, the morning is wiser than the evening. . . . There 's no occasion for growing sentimental."

But at that moment the watchman beat loudly and persistently on his plank in the garden—and his long-drawn shout rang out: "Lis . . te . e . . en!"

"Wa-a-a-atch!"—responded another mournful voice.

"Phew, great God!—exactly as though it were a fortress!"

## VIII

NEZHDÁNOFF awoke early, and without waiting for the servant to make his appearance, he dressed himself, and descended into the garden. It was very large and beautiful, and was kept in capital order; hired labourers were scraping the paths with spades; amid the dark-green of the shrubbery flashed scarlet kerchiefs on the heads of peasant lasses armed with rakes. Nezhdánoff made his way to the pond; the morning mist had cleared away from it,—but it was still smoking in places in the shady curves of the shores. The sun, which was not high yet, cast a rosy light over the silky leaden hue of its broad surface. Five carpenters were at work on the dam; there also, lightly swaying from side to side, and sending out from itself a faint ripple across the water, a new, handsomely painted boat was rocking. The sounds of the people's voices were infrequent and repressed; over all there was a breath of morning, of the tranquillity and success of matutinal labour, a breath of order and a regularly organised life. And lo! at a turn of the avenue, the personification of order and regularity presented itself to Nezhdánoff—Sipyágin himself made his appearance. He wore a yellow-grey

coat, in form like a dressing-gown, and a party-coloured cap; he was leaning on an English cane of bamboo, and his freshly-shaved face exhaled satisfaction; he was walking about to inspect his domain. Sipyágin gave Nezhdánoff a courteous greeting.

"Aha!"—he exclaimed;—"I perceive that you are one of the young people, and an early bird!" He probably wished, by this not particularly appropriate saying, to express his approval of Nezhdánoff, because the latter, like himself, did not lie late in bed.—"We drink tea in company at eight o'clock, in the dining-room, and at twelve o'clock, we breakfast; at ten o'clock, you will give Kólya his first lesson in the Russian language, and at two, in history. To-morrow, the ninth of May, is his Name-day, and there will be no lessons; but I beg that you will begin to-day!"

Nezhdánoff inclined his head, and Sipyágin took leave of him in the French manner, raising his hand swiftly several times in succession to his own lips and nose—and went his way, adroitly flourishing his cane, and whistling—not in the least like an important official or dignitary,—but like a kindly Russian country gentleman.

Nezhdánoff remained in the garden until eight o'clock, enjoying the shade of the ancient trees, the freshness of the air, the singing of the birds; the roar of the gong summoned him to the house —and he found the whole company in the dining-

room. Valentína Mikhaílovna treated him in an extremely amiable manner; in her morning toilet she seemed to him a perfect beauty. Marianna's face expressed her wonted concentration and surliness. Precisely at ten o'clock the first lesson took place, in the presence of Valentína Mikhaílovna; she first inquired of Nezhdánoff whether she would not be in the way, and she behaved very discreetly throughout. Kólya proved to be an intelligent lad; after the inevitable first hesitations and awkwardnesses, the lesson proceeded successfully. Valentína Mikhaílovna appeared to be extremely well satisfied with Nezhdánoff, and several times entered into conversation with him.—He hung back, but not too much. Valentína Mikhaílovna was present, also, at the second lesson in Russian history. She announced with a smile, that on that subject she needed a teacher as much as Kólya did—and behaved herself as decorously and as quietly as at the first lesson. From three until five o'clock Nezhdánoff sat in his own chamber, wrote letters to Petersburg, and—and felt himself . . . so-so; he was not bored, he was not sad; his strained nerves were gradually relaxing. They became strained again during dinner, although Kallomyéitzeff was absent, and the caressing kindness of the hostess had undergone no change; but that very kindness somewhat enraged Nezhdánoff.—In addition to this, his neighbour, the old spinster,

Anna Zakhárovna, was openly hostile and in the sulks, while Marianna continued to be serious, and Kólya kicked him with his feet with altogether too much lack of ceremony. Sipyágin, also, appeared to be out of sorts. He was greatly dissatisfied with the superintendent of his paper-factory, a German, whom he had hired at a large salary. Sipyágin began to abuse all Germans in general, in which connection he announced that he was, to a certain degree, a Slavyánophil, although not a fanatic, and he alluded to a young Russian, a certain Solómin, who, according to report, had put the factory of a neighbouring merchant on a very good footing; he greatly desired to make the acquaintance of this Solómin. Toward evening, Kallomyeítzeff arrived, his estate being only ten miles distant from "Arzhánoe"; that was the name of Sipyágin's village. The arbitrator of the peace arrived also, one of those landed proprietors whom Lérmontoff has no neatly characterised in the two familiar lines:

> All hidden in his neckcloth, with frock-coat to his heels. . .
> Moustache, falsetto—and troubled gaze.

There came also another neighbour, with a dejected, toothless countenance, but very cleanly dressed; the district doctor came, a very wretched physician, who was fond of showing off his

learned terminology; he asserted, for example, that he preferred Kúkolnik to Púshkin, because Kúkolnik had a great deal of "protoplasm." They sat down to play slam. Nezhdánoff retired to his own room—and read and wrote until after midnight.

On the following day, the ninth of May, Kólya's Name-day was celebrated. The "gentry," in a mass, in three open carriages, with lackeys on the foot-board, set out to attend the Liturgy, although the church was not more than a quarter of a verst away. Everything went off in very ceremonious, stately, and sumptuous style. Sipyágin donned his Order-ribbon; Valentína Mikhaílovna dressed herself in a very charming Paris gown—pale lilac in hue—and in church, during the service, she prayed out of a tiny book, bound in crimson velvet; this little book took some of the old men aback; one of them could not control himself, and inquired of his neighbour: "Is she practising witchcraft, the Lord forgive her!"[1] The fragrance of the flowers with which the church was filled, mingled with the strong scent of the new sulphur-dipped peasant coats, the tarred boots and peasants' shoes—and over all these exhalations the stiflingly-agreeable perfume of the incense predominated. The clerics and sacristans in the chancel-choirs sang with

[1] The members of the Eastern Catholic Church do not use prayer-books, being trained to know the services by heart from early childhood.—TRANSLATOR.

wonderful assiduity. With the aid of the factory-hands, who had joined them, they even made a bold attempt at a concert.[1] There was a minute when all present felt rather . . . . apprehensive. The tenor voice (it belonged to the factory-hand Klim, a man with the worst form of consumption) emitted, without any sort of support whatever, chromatic, minor, and flat notes:—they were horrible, those notes! but if they had been eliminated the entire "concert" would instantly have gone to pieces. . . . As it was, the affair passed off well enough. Father Kyprián, a priest of the most venerable appearance, with epigonation and berretta [2] preached a very edifying sermon out of his note-book; unhappily, the zealous father considered it necessary to quote the names of several very wise Assyrian kings, which gave him great trouble as to pronunciation—and, although he displayed a certain amount of learning, still he also perspired violently! Nezhdánoff, who had not been to church for a long time, tucked himself away in a corner behind the peasant women; they merely gazed askance at him,

[1] At a certain point in the Liturgy—when the clergy are receiving the Sacrament in the altar, behind the closed doors of the ikonostásis, and nothing is in progress in the sight or hearing of the congregation—it is customary for the choir to sing an elaborate selection, generally called a "concert."—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Both are insignia of ecclesiastical rank. The epigonation is a square or diamond-shaped piece of material corresponding to the cope, representing "the sword of the Spirit," and is worn on the hip. The berretta, of purple velvet, also has two shapes, indicative of rank, the lesser being conical.—TRANSLATOR.

from time to time, making profound reverences, and gravely wiping their children's noses; on the other hand, the little peasant girls, in their new frocks, with pearl fringes on their brows, and the little boys, in their blouses girt about the waist, and their embroidered shoulder-seams and scarlet gussets, attentively scrutinised the new worshipper, turning their faces straight toward him. . . . And Nezhdánoff gazed at them, and thought—various things.

After the Liturgy, which lasted a very long time, and the prayer-service to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, which, as every one knows, is about the most lengthy of all the prayer-services in the Orthodox Church, the entire staff of clergy, by invitation of Sipyágin, betook themselves to the manor-house, and, after performing several more ceremonies befitting the occasion, and even sprinkling the rooms with holy water, received an abundant breakfast, in the course of which the customary hopeful but rather tiresome conversation took place. Both the host and the hostess—although they never breakfasted at that hour of the day—ate a little and sipped a little on that occasion. Sipyágin even narrated an anecdote, perfectly decorous, but laughable—which, in combination with his red ribbon and his official dignity, produced an impression that may be described as joyous, and aroused in Father Kyprián a feeling of gratitude and admiration.

By way of "recompense," and also in order to show that he also, on occasion, could impart something curious, Father Kyprián told about his interview with "the prelate," when the latter, in his trip of inspection through the diocese, summoned all the priests of the district to him to the monastery in the town.—"Our Bishop is strict, very strict,"—declared Father Kyprián:—"First he inquires about the parish and the arrangement of affairs, and then he puts you through an examination. . . . He addressed himself to me, also. —'What 's thy church feast?'—'The Transfiguration of the Lord,' says I.—'And dost thou know the hymn for that day?'—'I should think I did!'—'Chant it!'—'Well, so I immediately started up: "Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ our God. . . ."' 'Stop! What is the Transfiguration, and how is it to be understood?'—'In one word,' says I, 'Christ desired to show his glory to his 'disciples!' —'Good,' says he; 'here 's an ikóna for thee from me, as a souvenir.'—I bowed to his feet.—'I thank thee, Right Reverence!' says I. . . And so I did not leave him empty-handed."

"I have the honour to be personally acquainted with his Right Reverence,"—remarked Sipyágin, with an air of importance.—"A most worthy pastor!"

"Most worthy!"—assented Father Kyprián.

"Only, there 's no use in his trusting too much to the ecclesiastical superintendent. . . ."

Valentína Mikhaílovna alluded to the peasant school, and in this connection, pointed out Marianna as a future teacher; the deacon (he was intrusted with the oversight of the school);—a man of athletic build, and with a long, wavy head of hair, which dimly suggested the well-combed tail of an Orlóff trotter, was on the point of expressing his approbation; but as he did not take the powers of his throat into consideration, he produced such a deep quack, that he frightened even himself, and terrified the rest.—Shortly after this, the clergy withdrew.

Kólya, in his new round jacket with gold buttons, was the hero of the day: he received presents, he was congratulated, his hand was kissed from the front steps and from the back steps: the factory-hands, the house-servants, the old women and the young girls, the peasant men—chiefly out of ancient tradition of serfdom days—buzzed about in front of the house, around the tables spread with patties and flagons of liquor.—Kólya was both ashamed and delighted, and proud and abashed, and he cuddled up to his parents, and ran out of the room; and at dinner Sipyágin ordered champagne to be served,—and, before drinking to his son's health, he made a speech. He spoke about the significance of "serving the earth,"—and along what road he would like to

have his Nikolái walk! . . . (he called him precisely that)—and what they had a right to expect from him: in the first place, his family, in the second place, his social class, society; in the third place, the masses,—yes, my dear sirs, the masses,—and, in the fourth place, the government! Gradually elevating his style, Sipyágin at last attained to genuine eloquence, and therewith, after the similitude of Robert Peel, he thrust his hand under his coat-tails; he became touched with emotion over the word "science," and wound up his speech with the Latin exclamation: "*Laboremus!*" which he immediately translated into Russian. Kólya, champagne-glass in hand, walked down the whole length of the table to thank his father, and kissed everybody.

Again it happened that Nezhdánoff exchanged glances with Marianna. . . . Both of them, in all probability, felt the same thing. . . . But they did not speak to each other.

However, everything which he had seen struck Nezhdánoff as more ridiculous and even interesting, than vexatious or repulsive, and the amiable hostess, Valentína Mikhaílovna, appeared to him to be a very clever woman who knew that she was playing a part, and, at the same time, was secretly delighted that there was another person, also clever and perspicacious, who understood her... Nezhdánoff probably did not himself suspect, to

what a degree his self-love was flattered by her manner of treating him.

On the following day the lessons were resumed, and life flowed on in its wonted rut.

A week passed, imperceptibly. . . The very best idea as to what Nezhdánoff felt, as to what he thought, will be furnished by an extract from a letter of his to a certain Sílin, a comrade of his at the gymnasium, and his best friend. This Sílin did not live in Petersburg, but in a distant governmental town with a wealthy relative, on whom he was entirely dependent. His situation had been so ordained that he could not even dream of ever breaking away from it; he was a weakly man, timid, and of limited capacity, but remarkably pure in soul. He was not interested in politics, he perused a few little books, he played on the flute to relieve the tedium, and was afraid of young ladies. Sílin was passionately attached to Nezhdánoff—he had in general an affectionate heart. There was no one to whom Nezhdánoff so unrestrainedly expressed his thoughts as to Vladímir Sílin; when he wrote to him it always seemed to him that he was chatting with a near and familiar being,—but an inhabitant of the other world, or his own conscience. Nezhdánoff could not even imagine to himself how he could ever again live with Sílin on friendly terms in the same town. . . He would, in all probability, have immediately cooled toward

him; they had very little in common; but he wrote to him gladly and voluminously—and with entire frankness. With others—on paper, at least, —he always seemed to be deceiving or putting on airs;—with Sílin—never! As he did not wield a ready pen, Sílin made scant reply in brief, awkward phrases; but Nezhdánoff did not require lengthy answers: he knew, without that, that his friend devoured his every word, as the dust of the highway drinks in the spatters of rain, kept his secrets like a holy thing—and, buried in remote and never-quitted isolation, lived only with his life. Nezhdánoff had never told any one in the world of his relations to him, and treasured them to an uncommon degree.

"Well, my dear friend,—my pure Vladímir!"—[thus he wrote to him: he always called him "pure," and not without reason!]—"congratulate me: I have hit upon green pastures, and can now rest and recuperate my strength. I am living as tutor, in the house of the wealthy dignitary Sipyágin, I am teaching his little son, I am eating splendid food (I never ate such food in my life), I am sleeping soundly, I am strolling to my heart's content in the beautiful surrounding country—and, the chief thing of all: I have escaped, for a time, from the tutelage of my Petersburg friends; and although at first I was fiercely gnawed by tedium, I seem to feel more at my ease now. I shall speedily be compelled to put my shoulder to the wheel, which thou knowest, that is to say, to crawl into the pannier, as I have

offered myself as the load (and that is precisely the reason why I was given leave of absence to come hither); but for the time being I may live the precious animal life, grow a fat belly—and, perhaps, even compose verses, if the desire impels me. The so-called observations are postponed until another time: the estate seems to me well organised, only perhaps the factory is in rather a bad condition; the peasant lands bought at the Emancipation are, somehow, inaccessible; the hired house-servants all are exceedingly decorous characters. But we will discuss that later on. The master and mistress of the house are courteous, liberal; the gentleman is forever condescending, forever condescending—and then, all of a sudden, he takes and flares up; a highly cultured man! The lady—a regular beauty, and must have her wits about her, I think; she keeps such good watch of one—and yet she is so gentle!—Absolutely boneless! I amuse her; for thou knowest what sort of a squire of dames I am!—There are neighbours—bad ones; one old woman persecutes me. . . . But there is one young girl who interests me most of all, and whether she is a relative or a companion,—the Lord only knows! —with whom I have hardly exchanged two words, but whom I divine to be a berry from the same field as myself. . . . ."

Here followed a description of Marianna—of all her habits; and then he went on:

"That she is unhappy, proud, egotistical, reserved, but, most of all, unhappy, I have not the slightest doubt. Why she is unhappy,—I have not, as yet, found out.

That she has an upright nature,—is clear to me; but is she kind?—that is the question. And are there any thoroughly kind women in existence—unless they are stupid? And is that necessary? However, I know very little about women in general. The mistress of the house does not like her. . . And she repays her in the same coin. . . . But which of them is in the right—I know not. I assume that the mistress of the house is more likely not to be in the right . . . as she is extremely polite to her; and *she* even twitches her eyebrows nervously when she talks with her patroness. Yes; she is a very nervous creature; that, also, is in my line. And she is *dislocated*,—just as I am,—although, probably, not in the same manner.

"When all this becomes somewhat straightened out, I will write to thee. . . .

"She hardly ever talks with me, as I have already told thee; but in her few words addressed to me (always suddenly and unexpectedly) there rings a certain harsh frankness. . . . This is very pleasing to me.

"By the way,—does thy relative still keep thee on a dry diet—and is n't he preparing to give up the ghost?

"Hast thou read, in the *European Messenger*, that article about the last Pretenders to the crown in the Orenburg Government? That took place in the year 1834, brother! I love not that magazine, and the author is a conservative; but it is an interesting thing, and may lead one to reflection. . . . ."

## IX

MAY had rolled on to its second half; the first hot summer days had come.—On finishing his history lesson, Nezhdánoff wended his way to the garden, and from the garden passed into the birch grove which adjoined it on one side.—A portion of this grove had been felled by merchants, fifteen years previously; but all the denuded places were now planted with a dense underbrush of young birch-trees. Like pillars of a dull-silver hue, with greyish horizontal rings, stood the close-set trees; the little leaves shone with a clear and vigorous green, exactly as though some one had washed them, and had covered them with varnish; the spring grass was thrusting its sharp spears through the smooth layer of last year's dark straw-coloured foliage. The whole grove was intersected by narrow paths; yellow-billed black thrushes, with sudden cry as though alarmed, flitted athwart these paths, low down, almost grazing the ground, and dashed headlong into the thicket. After strolling about for half an hour, Nezhdánoff, at last, seated himself on the stump of a felled tree, surrounded by grey, aged chips: they lay in a heap, just as they had

fallen when chopped off long ago by the axe. Many times had the winter snow covered them—and retreated from them in the spring,—and no one had touched them. Nezhdánoff sat with his back to a thick wall of young birches, in a dense but short shadow; he was not thinking of anything, he had surrendered himself completely to that peculiar sensation of springtime with which —in the young as well as in the old heart—there is always an admixture of sadness . . . . the agitated sadness of expectation—in the young; the impassive sadness of regret—in the old. . . .

All at once Nezhdánoff heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

It was not one person who was walking there, —and not a peasant in bast slippers or in heavy boots,—and not a bare-footed peasant woman. There appeared to be two persons, walking at a leisurely, measured pace. . . . A woman's gown rustled lightly. . . .

All at once a dull voice, a man's voice, rang out:

"And so this is your last word? Never?"

"Never!"—repeated another, a woman's voice, which struck Nezhdánoff as familiar; and, a moment later, around a turn in the path which, at that point, wound among the young birch-trees,—Marianna stepped forth, accompanied by a swarthy, black-eyed man, whom Nezhdánoff had never beheld until that moment.

Both stopped short, as though rooted to the spot, at the sight of Nezhdánoff;—and Nezhdánoff was so astounded that he did not even rise from the stump on which he was sitting. . . . Marianna blushed to the very roots of her hair, but immediately burst into a scornful laugh. . . . To whom did that laugh refer—to herself, because she had blushed—or to Nezhdánoff? . . . And her companion knitted his thick eyebrows, and the yellowish whites of his restless eyes flashed. Then he exchanged a glance with Marianna,—and both, turning their backs on Nezhdánoff, walked away, in silence, without accelerating their pace, while he watched them with a look of amazement.

Half an hour later he returned to the house, to his room,—and when, summoned by the roaring of the gong, he entered the drawing-room, he beheld in it that same black-visaged stranger who had run up against him in the grove. Sipyágin led Nezhdánoff up to him, and introduced him as his brother-in-law, the brother of Valentína Mikhaílovna—Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch Markéloff.

"I beg, gentlemen, that you will love and favour each other!"—exclaimed Sipyágin, with the majestically courteous and, at the same time, preoccupied smile which was so characteristic of him.

Markéloff made a silent bow. Nezhdánoff re-

sponded in the same manner . . . and Sipyágin, throwing his small head a little backward and shrugging his shoulders, withdrew to one side,—as much as to say: "I have brought you together, and whether you do love and favour each other or not is a matter of entire indifference to me!"

Then Valentína Mikhaílovna approached to the pair who stood there immovable, again presented them to each other—and, with the peculiar, affectionately brilliant glance which, as though at the word of command, welled up in her wonderful eyes, entered into conversation with her brother.

"What dost thou mean, *cher Serge,* by forgetting us altogether! thou didst not even come to us on Kólya's Name-day. Have thy occupations so overwhelmed thee?

"He is establishing a new order of things with his peasants,"—she said, turning to Nezhdánoff,—"a very original order of things; he is giving them three fourths of everything—and leaving himself only one fourth; and even so, he thinks that he is getting a great deal."

"My sister is fond of jesting,"—said Markéloff, addressing Nezhdánoff, in his turn;—"but I am ready to agree with her that for *one* man to take one quarter of what belongs to whole *hundreds* really is to take a great deal."

"And you, Alexyéi Dmítritch,—have you observed that I am fond of jesting?"—inquired

Madame Sipyágin, still with the same caressing gentleness of look and voice.

Nezhdánoff did not know what reply to make; —and just then Kallomyeítzeff's arrival was announced. The hostess advanced to meet him and, a few minutes later, the butler made his appearance, and in a drawling voice announced that dinner was served.

At dinner Nezhdánoff involuntarily kept gazing at Marianna and Markéloff.—They sat side by side, both with eyes cast down, with compressed lips, with a lowering and stern, almost vicious expression of countenance. Nezhdánoff was particularly perplexed by the thought—how Markéloff could be the brother of Madame Sipyágin. There was so little resemblance to be observed between them.—Possibly, in one point only: they both had swarthy skins; but Valentína Mikhaílovna's dull-white complexion, arms and shoulders constituted one of her charms . . . . in her brother it passed into that blackness which polite people designate as " bronze," but which, to the Russian eyes, is suggestive of—the leg of a boot. Markéloff had curly hair, a rather hooked nose, thick lips, sunken cheeks, a hollow abdomen, and sinewy hands. Altogether, he was sinewy and lean, and he talked in a brazen, abrupt voice. His glance was drowsy, his aspect surly—a regular bilious temperament. He ate little, and spent most of his time in rolling little balls of bread,

and only now and then did he cast his eyes on Kallomyeítzeff, who had just returned from town, where he had seen the Governor in connection with an affair which was not in the least an agreeable one for him, Kallomyeítzeff, concerning which, however, he carefully held his peace, and chirped like a nightingale.

Sipyágin, as on the former occasion, snubbed him when he became too obstreperous, but laughed a great deal at his anecdotes and bon-mots, although he considered "*qu'il est un affreux réactionnaire.*" Kallomyeítzeff asserted, among other things, that he had gone into perfect raptures over the name which the peasants—*oui, oui! les simples mougiks!*—bestow on lawyers. "Barkers! barkers!"—he repeated enthusiastically:—"*ce peuple russe est délicieux!*"—Then he related how, once upon a time, when he was visiting a school for the common people, he had put to the school-master a question: "What is a *strophokamíl?*"[1]—And, as no one was able to answer it, not even the teacher, he, Kallomyeítzeff, had put another question: "What is a *pithík?*"[2]—and had cited Khémnitzer's verse: "And the weak-minded *pithík,* the delineator of beast-like faces!"—And no one had answered that question of his either.—"So much for your popular schools!"

"But excuse me,"—remarked Valentína Mi-

[1] Ostrich.—Translator. [2] Ape.—Translator.

khaílovna,—" I myself do not know what sort of wild beasts those are."

" Madame!" exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, " It is not necessary that you should know!"

" But why should the people know?"

" Because—it is better for them to know *pithík* or *strophokamíl* than—some Prudhomme or other—or even Adam Smith!"

But at this point Sipyágin snubbed Kallomyeítzeff once more by announcing that Adam Smith was one of the lights of human thought, and that it would be useful to imbibe his principles (he poured himself out a glass of château d'Yquem) . . . . " along with the mother's milk!" (he passed the wine under his nose and inhaled the aroma). . . . Then he gulped down the wine. Kallomyeítzeff also sipped the wine and praised it.

Markéloff paid no particular attention to the babble of the Petersburg Gentleman of the Emperor's Bedchamber, but he cast a couple of interrogative glances at Nezhdánoff, and, firing a bread-ball, he came within an ace of hitting the eloquent visitor straight on the nose. . . .

Sipyágin left his brother-in-law in peace; Valentína Mikhaílovna did not talk to him either; it was obvious that both of them, husband and wife, had become accustomed to regard Markéloff as an eccentric person who had better not be irritated.

After dinner Markéloff betook himself to the

billiard-room to smoke his pipe, and Nezhdánoff went off to his room.—In the corridor he encountered Marianna. He was on the point of passing her . . when she stopped him with an abrupt gesture of her hand.

"Mr. Nezhdánoff,"—she began, in a rather unsteady voice,—"it really ought to be a matter of indifference to me what you think about me: nevertheless, I suppose . . . . I suppose . . . ." (she was at a loss for words) . . . "I suppose that it is appropriate to say to you, that when you met me and Mr. Markéloff to-day in the grove . . . . You probably thought, did you not, 'Why did both of them become confused, and why did they come thither,—as though by appointment?'"

"It really did strike me as rather strange . . ." began Nezhdánoff.

"Mr. Markéloff,"—interposed Marianna,—"made me an offer of marriage—and I refused him. That is all I have to say to you; and now—good-bye. And think what you will of me."

She turned swiftly away, and retreated down the corridor with hasty steps.

Nezhdánoff returned to his own room and, seating himself by the window, fell into thought.—What a strange girl, and to what end that savage sally, that unbidden frankness? What was it—a desire to be original—or simply pompous language—or pride? Most likely of all it was

pride. She could not endure the slightest suspicion. . . . She could not bear the thought that another person should judge falsely concerning her.—A strange girl!

Thus did Nezhdánoff meditate; and downstairs, on the terrace, a conversation about him was in progress; and he heard it all very distinctly.

"My nose scents out,"—asserted Kallomyeítzeff,—"scents out that he is—a red. Formerly, when I was an official for special commissions, attached to the General-Governor of Moscow,—*avec Ladislas,*—I got my wits sharpened on the subject of that sort of gentry—the reds, and also the Old Ritualists. I used to get the upper hand of them instinctively."—Here Kallomyeítzeff, "by the way," narrated how, once upon a time, in the suburbs of Moscow, he had caught *by the heels* an old sectarian, on whom he had made a sudden descent with the police, and who had all but leaped out of the window of his cottage. . . . "And up to that minute he had been sitting peaceably on his bench, the knave!"

Kallomyeítzeff forgot to add, that that same old man, when put in prison, had refused all food—and had starved himself to death.

"And your new teacher,"—went on the mettlesome Gentleman of the Bedchamber,—"is a red, without fail! Have you noticed that he never is the first to bow?"

"But why should he be the first to bow?"—re-

marked Madame Sipyágin;—"on the contrary, I like that in him."

"I am a guest in the house where he serves," —exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff,—"yes, yes, serves for money, *comme un salarié*. . . Consequently, I am his superior.—And he *ought* to make me the first bow."

"You are very exacting, my dearest fellow," —interposed Sipyágin, with emphasis on *est;*— "all that, pardon me, reeks of antiquated customs. I have purchased his services, his work, but he remains a free man."

"He does not feel the bit,"—went on Kallomyeítzeff,—"the bit,—*le frein!* All those reds are just like that. I tell you, I have a wonderful nose for them!—No one but Ladislas, possibly, can compete with me in that respect.—If he were to fall into my hands, that tutor,—I 'd bring him up with a round turn! He should sing another tune for me;—and the way he would take off his hat to me would be simply splendid!"

"The rubbish, the braggart!"—Nezhdánoff above came near shouting out. . . . But at that moment the door of his room opened—and, to the no small amazement of Nezhdánoff,—Markéloff entered.

## X

NEZHDÁNOFF rose from his seat to welcome him, but Markéloff walked straight up to him, and without a bow, without a smile, asked him: "was it true that he was Alexyéi Dmítritch Nezhdánoff, student of the St. Petersburg University?"

"Yes . . . exactly so,"—replied Nezhdánoff.

Markéloff drew from a side pocket an unsealed letter.—"In that case, read this. It is from Vasíly Nikoláevitch,"—he added, significantly lowering his voice.

Nezhdánoff unfolded and read the letter. It was something in the nature of a semi-official circular, in which the bearer, Sergyéi Markéloff, was recommended as one of "ours," who was entirely worthy of confidence; then followed an injunction as to the pressing necessity of concerted action, as to the dissemination of well-known rules. The circular was addressed to Nezhdánoff, among others, as to a man who was also trustworthy.

Nezhdánoff offered his hand to Markéloff, invited him to be seated, and sat down himself on a chair. Markéloff began by lighting a cigarette, without having uttered a word. Nezhdánoff followed his example.

"Have you already succeeded in entering into relations with the peasants here?"—inquired Markéloff, at last.

"No; I have not succeeded in that, so far."

"And is it long since you arrived here?"

"It will soon be a fortnight."

"Are you very busy?"

"Not very."

Markéloff coughed gruffly.

"Hm! The common people here are a pretty empty lot,"—he went on;—"an ignorant lot. They must be instructed. There is great poverty, and no one can explain whence that poverty arises."

"Your brother-in-law's former serfs are not poverty-stricken, so far as I can judge,"—remarked Nezhdánoff.

"My brother-in-law is a sly dog; he 's a master-hand at diverting one's attention. The local peasants are all right, 't is true; but he has a factory. That is where our efforts must be applied. All you have to do is to delve down there: things will be turned upside down immediately, as though it were an ant-hill.—Have you any little books with you?"

"Yes . . . but not many."

"I 'll get you some. How does that happen?"

Nezhdánoff made no answer.—Markéloff, also, relapsed into silence, and merely emitted smoke through his nostrils.

"But what a villain that Kallomyeítzeff is,"—he suddenly went on.—"At dinner I kept thinking: 'Shall I rise and go up to that gentleman and pound his whole arrogant phiz to powder, in order that others may not be tempted to do the same? But no! There are more important matters on hand at present, than thrashing Gentlemen of the Bedchamber!'—This is no time for waxing wroth with fools because they utter foolish words; now is the time to prevent their perpetrating foolish deeds."

Nezhdánoff nodded his head affirmatively,—and again Markéloff devoted himself to his cigarette.

"Here, out of all the menials in the house, there is one very business-like young fellow,"—he began again;—"not your servant Iván . . . he 's a sort of fish, but the other fellow—his name is Kyríll; he serves in the pantry." (This Kyríll was well known to be a bitter drunkard.) "You just pay heed to him. He 's a turbulent fellow . . . but we cannot afford to be dainty. And what do you say to my sister?"—he added, suddenly raising his head and riveting his yellow eyes on Nezhdánoff.—"She is even more crafty than my brother-in-law. What is your opinion about her?"

"I think that she is a very agreeable and amiable lady. . . And she is very handsome, to boot."

"Hm! with what precision you gentlemen from

Petersburg express yourselves. . . I am amazed! —Well . . . and as for . . . ." he was beginning, but suddenly frowned; his face grew lowering, and he did not finish the sentence which he had begun.—" I perceive that you and I must have a good talk,"—he began afresh.—" Here it is impossible. The devil take them! I believe they listen at the doors. Do you know what I am going to propose to you? To-day is Saturday; to-morrow, probably, you do not give my nephew any lessons? . . is n't that so? "

" I have a review lesson with him to-morrow, at three o'clock."

" A review! Exactly like a rehearsal at the theatre. It must be that dear sister of mine who invents such words. Well, never mind. Come at once to me, will you? My village lies ten versts from here. I have good horses: we will drive off thither at full speed; you shall pass the night with me, and spend the morning,—and to-morrow, by three o'clock, I will fetch you back. Do you accept? "

" Very well,"—said Nezhdánoff. From the first moment of Markéloff's entrance he had felt himself in an excited and constrained condition. —His sudden intimacy with him disconcerted him; but, at the same time, he felt drawn toward him. He felt, he understood, that he had before him a being who was probably dull, but was indisputably honest—and powerful.—Added to

this, that strange encounter in the grove, that unexpected explanation from Marianna.

"Well, that 's very fine!"—exclaimed Markéloff.—"Meanwhile, do you make ready; and I will go and give orders to have the tarantás harnessed. I hope that you are not obliged to ask permission of the heads of the house here?"

"I shall inform them. Otherwise, I assume that I cannot absent myself."

"I will tell them,"—put in Markéloff.—"Don't trouble yourself.—At present they are quarrelling over their cards, and will not notice your absence. My brother-in-law aspires to become a statesman, and the only qualification he has for the post is, that he plays cards capitally. Well, there 's no use talking about it; many make their way through that wicket-gate! . . . So hold yourself in readiness. I will immediately take all necessary measures."

Markéloff left the room; and an hour later Nezhdánoff was sitting by his side, on a large leather cushion, in a spacious, roomy, very old-fashioned and very comfortable tarantás; the thick-set little coachman on the box kept whistling incessantly, with a wonderfully agreeable, bird-like whistle; the troïka of piebald horses, with black plaited manes and tails, dashed swiftly along the level road; and the separate trees, bushes, fields, meadows and ravines,—already veiled in the first shades of twilight (the clock

had struck ten at the moment of their departure); —glided smoothly past, some behind, others in front, according to their degree of remoteness.

Markéloff's tiny hamlet (it had only two hundred desyatínas[1] of land in all, and yielded an income of about seven hundred rubles, and was called Borzyónkovo) was situated three versts[2] from the capital of the government, from which Sipyágin's estate lay at a distance of seven versts. In order to reach Borzyónkovo, it was necessary to traverse the town.—The new acquaintances had not succeeded in exchanging half a hundred words, when the wretched suburban hovels of the petty burghers flitted before them, with their broken board roofs, and dim splotches of light in their tiny windows twisted out of the perpendicular; and then the stones of the town pavement thundered beneath the wheels, the tarantás jolted, and lurched from side to side, bouncing upward, and at every jolt they swept past merchants' stupid, two-story stone houses with pediments, churches with columns, taverns. . . . It was almost Sunday; there were no longer any pedestrians in the streets, but there were still throngs of people in the dram-shops. Hoarse voices rang out thence, drunken songs, the whining sounds of the accordion; from the suddenly-opened doors rushed forth sordid heat, the pun-

[1] A desyatína is 2.70 acres.—Translator.
[2] A verst is 0.66 of a mile.—Translator.

gent odour of spirits, the red glow of night-lights. In front of almost every dram-shop stood peasant-carts, harnessed to shaggy, pot-bellied nags; submissively drooping their dishevelled heads, they appeared to be asleep. A tattered, girdleless peasant, with a puffy, winter cap hanging on the nape of his neck like a sack, emerged from a dram-shop, and leaning his breast against the shafts, remained motionless, weakly fingering over something, and spreading out his hands and fumbling; or a gaunt factory-hand, with his cap on one ear, with his nankeen blouse hanging loosely, and barefooted,—he had left his boots in the dram-shop,—took a few irresolute steps, halted, scratched his back, and, suddenly emitting a groan, turned back. . . .

"Liquor vanquishes the Russian man!" gloomily remarked Markéloff.

"It 's grief, dear little father, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch!"—remarked the coachman, without turning round; he had ceased to whistle as he passed each dram-shop, and seemed to retreat into himself.

"Go on! Go on!"—replied Markéloff, angrily shaking the collar of his coat. The tarantás crossed a spacious market-place, all reeking with the odour of cabbage and linden-bast sacking, passed the Governor's residence, with its striped sentry-boxes at the gate, a private house with a tower, the boulevard with recently-planted and al-

ready expiring trees, the grand bazaar, filled with the barking of dogs and the rattling of chains; and gradually emerging beyond the town gates, having overtaken a long, long train of sledges which had set out on their journey while it was still cold, they found themselves once more in the air of the country, on the highway fringed with willows—and once more they rolled briskly and smoothly onward.

Markéloff—we must really say a few words about him—was six years older than his sister, Madame Sipyágin. He had been educated in the artillery school, whence he had graduated as an officer; but he had resigned, while still holding the rank of ensign, on account of a row with his commander—a German. Thenceforth he hated the Germans, especially Russian Germans. His resignation had ruined his relations with his father, whom he never saw again before the latter's death; but he had inherited from him a tiny estate, and had settled down on it. In Petersburg he had frequently associated with various clever, prominent people, whom he fairly venerated; they had definitively determined his mode of thought. Markéloff had read little,—and chiefly books pertaining to the cause:—especially Hertzen. He had preserved his military mien, lived like a Spartan and a monk. A few years prior to our story he had fallen passionately in love with a young girl; but the latter had jilted him in

the most unceremonious manner, and had married an adjutant—who was, moreover, of German extraction. Markéloff likewise detested adjutants. He tried to write special articles concerning the defects of our artillery service, but he possessed no talent for exposition:—he was not able to complete a single article—and yet he continued to scrawl huge sheets of common paper all over with his big, awkward, truly-childish chirography. Markéloff was a stubborn man, intrepid to desperation, who was incapable of forgiving or forgetting, was constantly offended on his own account, and on the account of all oppressed people—and ready for anything. His shallow mind hammered away constantly at one and the same point: what he did not understand did not exist for him; but he both despised and detested falsehood and lying. With persons of the higher class, with "reactionary high officials," as he expressed himself, he was curt and even rude; with the common people he was simple; with a peasant he was as sociable as with a brother. He was a mediocre farmer; he had divers socialistic plans whirling through his brain, which he was as unable to put in practice as he was to finish the articles which he had begun about the defects of the artillery. On the whole—he was not lucky—never, in anything: in the military academy he had borne the nickname of "the unlucky." A sincere, straightforward man, with a passionate, unhappy nature, he could, under cer-

tain circumstances, show himself to be pitiless, bloodthirsty, and earn the name of monster—and he could, also, sacrifice himself unhesitatingly and irrevocably.

At the third verst from the town, the tarantás suddenly entered the soft gloom of an aspen-grove, with the rustle and quiver of invisible foliage, with the fresh bitterness of the forest scent, with dim apertures above, and tangled shadows below. The moon had already risen above the horizon, red and broad as a copper shield. Emerging from beneath the trees, the tarantás found itself in front of a small manor-house. Three lighted windows stood out like brilliant squares on the front of the low-roofed house, which obscured the disk of the moon: the gates, which stood ajar, were never closed. In the courtyard, through the semi-darkness, a tall kibítka was visible, with two white posting-horses hitched behind to the rack. Two puppies, also white, sprang out from somewhere or other, and set up a piercing but not ill-natured barking. People began to move about in the house—the tarantás rolled up to the steps; and, with difficulty climbing out, and searching with his foot for the iron step, affixed, as usual, by a home-bred blacksmith, in the most inconvenient place possible, Markéloff said to Nezhdánoff:

"Here we are, at home—and you will find here guests whom you know well, but were by no means expecting to meet.—Pray enter!"

## XI

THESE guests turned out to be our old acquaintances, Ostrodúmoff and Miss Mashúrin. Both were sitting in the small, very badly furnished drawing-room of Markéloff's house—and were drinking beer and smoking tobacco by the light of a kerosene lamp. They were not surprised at Nezhdánoff's arrival; they knew that Markéloff intended to bring him back with him; but Nezhdánoff was greatly surprised at the sight of them. When he entered, Ostrodúmoff said: "Good evening, brother!"—and that was all; Miss Mashúrin first blushed all over, then offered her hand. Markéloff explained to Nezhdánoff that Ostrodúmoff and Miss Mashúrin had been sent "on the general business," which was now soon to be put in operation; that they had left Petersburg a week before; that Ostrodúmoff was to remain in the Government of S. for the purposes of propaganda,—but Miss Mashúrin was going to K., to interview a certain man.

Markéloff suddenly became angry, although no one had contradicted him:—with flashing eyes he began to talk in an excited, dull, but distinct voice, about the horrors that had been perpetrated,

about the indispensability of immediate action, and to the effect, that, in reality, everything was ready, and only cowards could dally; that a certain amount of force was indispensable, like the thrust of a lancet in an abscess, however ripe that abscess may be! He repeated this comparison of the lancet several times: it evidently pleased him; he had not invented it, but had read it somewhere or other.—It appeared that, having lost all hope of reciprocity on the part of Marianna, he had no compassion on anything any longer, and thought of nothing except how to begin on "the cause" as speedily as possible. He talked as though he were chopping with an axe, without any artifice, sharply, simply, and viciously; his words leaped monotonously out of his pallid lips, one after the other, in a manner suggestive of the barking of a stern and aged watch-dog. He showed that he was well acquainted with the neighbouring peasants and factory-hands, and that there were active men among them,—as, for instance, Goloplyótzky Eremyéi,—who, on the instant, would do anything that was wanted. This "goloplyótzky" Eremyéi—Eremyéi from the village of Goloplyók—was constantly recurring to his tongue. At intervals of every ten words he brought his right hand down with a bang—not palm-wise, but edge-wise—on the table, and thrust the left hand into the air, with the index-finger standing apart.—Those lean,

hairy hands, that booming voice, those flaming eyes, produced a powerful impression. During the ride Markéloff had talked little with Nezhdánoff; his bile had been accumulating . . . . and now it had broken forth. . . Miss Mashúrin and Ostrodúmoff encouraged him with a smile, a glance, occasionally with a brief exclamation; but something strange took place with Nezhdánoff. At first he tried to reply; he reminded them of the harmfulness of over-haste, of premature, inconsiderate actions; most of all, he was amazed how everything had already been decided, and why there was no doubt whatever, and no occasion whatever to consult circumstances, nor even to try to find out what the populace really wanted. . . . But later on all his nerves became as taut as guitar-strings—began to quiver—and with a sort of desperation, almost with tears of fury in his eyes, with his voice breaking into a scream, he began to talk in the same spirit as Markéloff; he even went further than the latter. —What incited him to this it would be difficult to say: whether it was repentance for having weakened of late, or vexation at himself and at others, or a sense of the necessity of stifling some inward worm or other, or, in conclusion, a desire to show off before the newly-arrived missionaries, . . . . or whether Markéloff's words really had taken effect on him, and fired his blood. The discussion continued until daybreak; Ostrodúmoff

and Miss Mashúrin never rose from their chairs, and Markéloff and Nezhdánoff never sat down. Markéloff stood rooted to one spot, exactly like a sentry; and Nezhdánoff kept pacing up and down the room with uneven strides, now slowly, now hurriedly. They talked about impending measures and means, about the part which each one was to assume, then sorted out and tied up in packages various wretched little books and separate printed sheets; they alluded to a merchant, a member of the sect of Old Ritualists, a certain Golúshkin, as an extremely reliable although uneducated man, and to the young propagandist Kislyakóff, who was expert, you know, but altogether too lively and possessed of too lofty an opinion of his own talents. Solómin's name was also mentioned. . . . .

"Is that the man who manages the cotton-spinning factory?"—inquired Nezhdánoff, recalling what had been said about him at the table of the Sipyágins.

"That 's the very man,"—said Markéloff.—"We must introduce you to him; we have not got a nibble at him, as yet, but he 's a capable man."

Eremyéi from Goloplyók made his appearance on the scene once more. Sipyágin's Kirílo was coupled with him, and with a certain Mendelyéi, nicknamed Porpoise, also; only, it was difficult to rely on this Porpoise; when sober he was brave,

but when drunk he was cowardly; and he was almost always drunk.

"Well, and how about your own people,"—Nezhdánoff asked Markéloff—"is there any one among them on whom you can rely?"

Markéloff replied that there was; but he did not mention a single one of them by name, and began to talk about the petty burghers in the town, and the theological students, who were, moreover, all the more useful because they were very stout in bodily strength—and when they should once begin to bring their fists into play,—well, just look out for yourself!—Nezhdánoff made some inquiries as to the nobles. Markéloff answered him that there were fifty of the young men—one of them, even, was a German,—and he was the most radical of the lot; only, everybody was aware that no reliance can be placed on a German . . . . he will immediately cheat you or sell you!—And they must wait to see what news Kislyakóff would obtain.—Nezhdánoff also inquired about the military men. Thereupon Markéloff stammered, tugged at his long side-whiskers, and finally declared that, so far, there was absolutely nothing to say about them . . . . unless Kislyakóff should discover something.

"But who is this Kislyakóff?"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff, impatiently.

Markéloff laughed significantly, and said that he was a man . . . such a man. . . . "However,

I am not very well acquainted with him,"—he added: "I have only met him twice, in all; but what letters that man does write, what letters! I will show you. . . . You will be amazed! simply—fire! And what activity! He has galloped from one end of Russia to the other, in all directions, five or six times . . . and at every posting-station a letter of ten or twelve pages!"

Nezhdánoff glanced inquiringly at Ostrodúmoff; but the latter sat like a statue, and never even moved an eyelash; and Miss Mashúrin pursed up her lips in a bitter smile,—and she also made as though she could not even guess! Nezhdánoff undertook to question Markéloff as to his reforms, in the socialistic spirit,—in his farming . . . but at this point Ostrodúmoff joined in.

"What is the use of discussing that now,"—he remarked,—"it makes no difference—everything must be altered later on.

The conversation returned again to political ground. The secret, inward worm continued to nibble and gnaw Nezhdánoff; but the more powerful was that gnawing the more loudly and irrevocably did he talk.—He had drunk only one glass of beer; but, from time to time, it seemed to him that he was completely intoxicated—and his head swam, and his heart beat with a sickly strenuousness. But when, at last, in the hour after midnight, the disputes came to an end, and the interlocutors, stepping round the page who was

sleeping in the anteroom, strode off to their separate nooks, Nezhdánoff, before he got into bed, stood for a long time motionless, with his eyes riveted on the floor in front of him. He seemed to hear an incessant, sorrowful, soul-nipping accent in everything which Markéloff had uttered; that man's egotism must have been wounded, he *must* have suffered, his hopes of personal happiness must have come to grief,—and yet, he had forgotten himself, he had surrendered himself to that which he recognised as the truth! A fellow of limited mind, thought Nezhdánoff. . . . "But is it not a hundred times better to be that sort of limited fellow than such . . . . such an one as I, for instance, feel myself to be?"

But here he rebelled against his self-humiliation.

".Why so? Shall not I, also, be capable of sacrificing myself? Wait, gentlemen. . . . And thou, Pákhlin, shalt also become convinced, in the course of time, that I, although I am an æsthetic, although I do write verses . . . . ."

He angrily flung back his hair with his hand, gnashed his teeth and, hastily pulling off his clothes, flung himself on the cold, damp bed.

"Good night!"—rang out Miss Mashúrin's voice on the other side of the door:—"I am your neighbour."

"Good-bye,"—replied Nezhdánoff, and immediately recalled the fact that she had never

taken her eyes from him during the whole course of the evening.

"What does she want?"—he whispered to himself—and was overcome with shame. "Akh, let me go to sleep as soon as possible!"

But it was difficult to control his nerves . . . . and the sun was already quite high in the heavens when at last he fell into a heavy and unrefreshing slumber.

The next morning he rose late, with a headache. He dressed himself, went to the window of the mezzanine[1] in which his chamber was situated—and perceived that Markéloff had no regular manor whatever; his small house stood on an exposed bluff, not far from a grove. A small granary, a stable, a tiny underground store-house, a little cottage, with a half-ruined straw thatch, on one side; on the other, a tiny pond, a small kitchen-garden, a hemp-patch, and another little cottage with a similar roof; in the distance, a rick of grain, a tiny threshing-shed, and an empty threshing-floor—this was all the "abundance" which presented itself to the eye. Everything seemed poor, rotten, and not exactly neglected or run wild, but as though it had never known a blossoming-time, like a sapling which has not taken root well. Nezhdánoff went down-stairs. Miss Mashúrin was sitting in front of the samo-

[1] In Russia, this term is used to designate a partial second story.—TRANSLATOR.

vár in the dining-room,—and, evidently, waiting for him. He learned from her that Ostrodúmoff had gone away on business—and would not return for a couple of weeks; and their host had gone off to attend to his hired labourers. As May was already approaching its end, and there was no work on hand which required haste, Markéloff had taken it into his head to fell a small birch-grove with his own tools, and had betaken himself thither early in the morning. Nezhdánoff felt a strange weariness in his soul. So much had been said the previous evening about the impossibility of any longer delay, and that all that remained to do was to "set to work." But how set to work, at what—and without delay, to boot? —There was no use in asking Miss Mashúrin; she knew no wavering; she was in no doubt as to what she ought to do, which was to go to K. Further than that she did not look. Nezhdánoff did not know what to say to her—and, having drunk his tea, he put on his hat, and went off in the direction of the birch-grove. On the way he met some peasants who were driving manure-wagons, former peasants of Markéloff's. He entered into conversation with them . . . but he did not get much out of them. They, too, seemed weary—but with physical, every-day fatigue, which did not, in the least, resemble the feeling that he was experiencing.—Their former owner, according to their statements, was a simple gentle-

man, only rather queer; they prophesied his ruin, because he did not know the rules and was always trying to act after his own fashion, not as his ancestors had done. And he was puzzling—you could n't understand him, try as you would!—but the kindest of the kind!—Nezhdánoff strolled on, and came upon Markéloff himself.

He was walking along, surrounded by a whole throng of labourers: it could be seen from a distance that he was explaining something to them, elucidating something—and then he waved his hand . . . . as much as to say: "I give it up!"

By his side walked his superintendent, a young fellow, mole-eyed, without anything imposing in his mien. This superintendent kept incessantly repeating: "That is as you like, sir,"—to the great vexation of his superior, who expected more independence from him. Nezhdánoff approached Markéloff, and beheld on his face the expression of exactly the same sort of spiritual weariness which he was feeling himself.—They bade each other good morning; Markéloff immediately began to talk,—briefly, it is true—about the "problems" of the previous evening, about the nearness of an upheaval; but the expression of weariness did not leave his countenance. He was all covered with dust and perspiration; chips of wood, green threads of moss had attached themselves to his clothing; his voice was hoarse. . . . The men who surrounded him maintained silence:

they were not exactly frightened, nor were they exactly sneering. . . . Nezhdánoff looked at Markéloff—and Ostrodúmoff's words again rang in his head: "What 's the use of it? It makes no difference—everything must be altered later on!" One labourer, who had committed a fault, began to entreat Markéloff to remit him his fine. . . . . At first Markéloff flew into a rage and shouted frantically—and then forgave him. . . . "It makes no difference—everything must be altered later on. . . ." Nezhdánoff asked for horses and a carriage that he might return home; Markéloff seemed to be surprised at his desire, but replied that everything should be ready directly.

He returned to the house in company with Nezhdánoff. . . . On the way he staggered with exhaustion.

"What is the matter with you?"—inquired Nezhdánoff.

"I am worn out!"—said Markéloff, fiercely.—"Explain things to those men as you will, they can understand nothing—and they do not execute my orders. . . . They don't even understand Russian.—The word 'portion' they know very well, . . . but 'sharing'—what is 'sharing'?[1] They do not understand! But it 's a Russian word, too, devil take it!—They imagine that I want to give to them a portion of land!" (Mar-

[1] Portion—*utchástok;* sharing—*utchástie.*—TRANSLATOR.

kéloff had taken it into his head to explain to the peasants the principle of association, and to introduce it on his own property, but they had resisted.—One of them had even said, in this connection: "The hole was deep, . . . but now the bottom cannot be seen, . . ." and all the other peasants had heaved a deep, unanimous sigh, which had completely annihilated Markéloff.)

On entering the house he dismissed his suite, and began to make arrangements about the carriage and horses—and about breakfast. . His staff of servants consisted of the page-boy, a woman-cook, a coachman, and a very antique old man, with ears overgrown with hair, in a long, cotton-and-wool kaftan, the former valet of his grandfather.—This old man stared incessantly, with profound dejection, at his master, and did nothing else,—and was hardly in a condition to do anything else; but he was always present, perched up on the little platform of the porch at the entrance.

After breakfasting on hard-boiled eggs, pilchards, and a dish of cold hash mixed with kvas (the page handed round the mustard in an old pomade-jar),—Nezhdánoff seated himself in the same tarantás in which he had arrived on the preceding evening: but instead of three horses, they had harnessed up only two for him: the third was being shod—it had gone lame. In the course of the breakfast Markéloff said very little, ate

nothing, and breathed violently. . . . He uttered two or three bitter words about his farming—and again waved his hand, with a gesture of despair. . . . . "It makes no difference—everything must be altered later on." Miss Mashúrin asked Nezhdánoff to take her to the town; she was obliged to go thither to make a few purchases: —"and I can return from town on foot—or I will get a lift in the cart of some peasant who is coming back."—As he escorted them both to the porch, Markéloff mentioned that he would soon send again for Nezhdánoff—and then . . . then (he gave a start, and recovered a little of his spirits)—they must come to a final agreement; that Solómin would come also; that he, Markéloff, was only waiting for news from Vasíly Nikoláevitch—and then there would be but one thing left to do: to "set to work" without delay—because the people (those same people who did not understand the word "sympathy") would not consent to wait any longer!

"But were you not going to show me the letters of that . . . what 's his name?—Kislyakóff?" —inquired Nezhdánoff.

"Later . . . later . . ."—said Markéloff, hastily.—"We 'll do everything then, all together."

The tarantás moved off.

"Hold yourself in readiness!" Markéloff's voice rang out for the last time. He was standing

on the steps, and by his side, with the same unalterable dejection in his gaze, with his crooked form drawn up, and both hands crossed behind his back, and emitting an odour of sour rye bread and the Oriental cotton-and-wool stuff of his kaftan,—but hearing nothing,—stood "the servant of servants," the decrepit old valet of his grandfather. Miss Mashúrin preserved silence until they reached the town, and merely smoked a cigarette. As they approached the town barrier she suddenly heaved a loud sigh.

"I am sorry for Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch,"—she said, and her face clouded over.

"He has put himself to a lot of trouble,"—remarked Nezhdánoff:—"it strikes me that his farm affairs are in a bad condition."

"That is not the reason I pity him."

"Why, then?"

"He is an unhappy, an unlucky man! . . . who could be better than he is; . . . but no, even he does not amount to much!"

Nezhdánoff looked at his companion.

"Why, do you know anything?"

"I know nothing . . . but every one divines for himself. Farewell, Alexyéi Dmítritch."

Miss Mashúrin alighted from the tarantás, and an hour later Nezhdánoff was driving into the courtyard of the Sipyágin house.—He did not feel very well.... He had passed a sleepless

night . . . . and then, all those controversies . . . those discussions . . . . . .

A handsome face looked out of the window, and bestowed a friendly smile on him. . . . It was Madame Sipyágin welcoming his return.

" What eyes she has! " he said to himself.

## XII

A GREAT many people came to dinner—and after dinner Nezhdánoff, taking advantage of the general commotion, slipped away to his own room. He wanted to be alone with himself, if only for a little while, that he might reduce to order the impressions which he had brought back from his trip. —At table Valentína Mikhaílovna had glanced at him attentively several times,—but evidently had no opportunity to speak to him; and Marianna, after her unexpected sally, which had so amazed him, seemed to be overcome with compunction, and shunned him.—Nezhdánoff was about to take up his pen; he wished to have a chat on paper with his friend Sílin;—but he found nothing to say to his friend; or, possibly, so many contradictory thoughts and sensations had accumulated in his head that he did not try to disentangle them—and he deferred it until another day.—Among the persons at dinner had been Mr. Kallomyeítzeff; never had he displayed more arrogance and gentlemanly scorn; but his free-and-easy speeches produced no effect on Nezhdánoff: he did not notice them. A sort of cloud enveloped him; it hung like a partly-dim

curtain between him and the rest of the world—and, strange to say, athwart that curtain only three faces were visible to him—and all three the faces of women—and all three had their eyes intently riveted upon him. They were: Madame Sipyágin, Miss Mashúrin, and Marianna. What did it mean? And why precisely those three faces? What had they in common? And what did they want of him?

He went to bed early,—but could not get to sleep. He was haunted by thoughts which were not so much sad as gloomy . . . thoughts about the inevitable end, about death. . . . They were familiar to him. For a long time he turned them over, in this direction and in that, now shuddering before the probability of annihilation, again welcoming it, almost rejoicing at it.—At last he became conscious of a peculiar agitation which was familiar to him. . . . He rose, seated himself at his writing-table, and, after meditating a while, wrote the following lines in his private note-book, almost without corrections:

"Dear friend, when I shall die—[1]
This is my will for thee:
The whole mass of my writings
Destroy thou, in that same hour!
Surround thou me with flowers,
Admit the sun to the room—

[1] I do not attempt a metrical translation. The alternate lines rhyme in the original.—TRANSLATOR.

Behind the closed doors
Set thou musicians.
Forbid them mournful plaint!
As at the hour of feasts,
Let the audacious waltz shriek forth
'Neath bows of violins!
As I hear the vanishing sounds
Of the strings as they die away,
I, too, shall die, and fall asleep. . . .
And troubling not with groan
The silence of death impending,
I shall pass to the other world,
Lulled by the airy sounds
Of airy earthly joy!"

When he wrote the word "friend" he was thinking still of Sílin. He declaimed his poem in an undertone—and felt astonished that it had flowed from his pen. This scepticism, this indifference, this frivolous unbelief—how did it all accord with his principles, with what he had said at Markéloff's?—He tossed the note-book into the table-drawer, and returned to his bed.—But he fell asleep just before dawn, when the first larks were already carolling in the whitening sky.

On the following day he had just finished lessons and was sitting in the billiard-room, when Madame Sipyágin entered, looked around her with a smile, and stepping up to him, invited him to come to her boudoir. She wore a light

barège gown, very simple and very pretty: the sleeves, bordered with a ruche, only came as far as her elbows, a broad ribbon encircled her waist, her hair fell in thick masses on her neck. Everything about her was redolent of courtesy and affection—of cautious, encouraging affection—everything: the tempered brilliancy of her half-closed eyes, the soft languor of her voice, of her movements, of her very gait. Madame Sipyágin conducted Nezhdánoff to her boudoir, a cosey, pleasant room, all permeated with the fragrance of flowers and perfumes, with the clean freshness of feminine attire, of constant feminine habitation; she seated him in an arm-chair, sat down beside him, and began to question him about his little excursion, about Markéloff's manner of life—and so cautiously, gently, nicely! She displayed genuine sympathy for the lot of her brother, whom, up to that moment—in Nezhdánoff's presence—she had never once mentioned. From some of her remarks one might have inferred that the feeling with which Marianna had inspired him had not escaped her notice; she fretted a little . . whether because Marianna had not shown reciprocity, or because her brother's choice had fallen upon a girl who was not congenial to her, did not appear. But the principal point was that she was openly endeavouring to subjugate Nezhdánoff, to inspire him with confidence in her, to make him cease to feel shy.—Valentína

Mikhaílovna even scolded him a little for entertaining a false impression with regard to her.

Nezhdánoff listened to her, gazed at her arms, her shoulders, now and then cast a glance at her rosy lips, at her softly-waving masses of hair.—At first he made very brief replies; he felt a certain obstruction in his throat and breast . . . but, little by little, this sensation was supplanted by another, which was still uneasy, but yet not devoid of a certain sweetness; he had not, in the least, expected that such a great and beautiful lady, such an aristocrat, would be capable of taking an interest in him, a simple student; but she not only took an interest in him—she seemed even to be flirting a little with him. Nezhdánoff asked himself to what end was she doing all this?—and found no answer; and, to tell the truth, he needed none. Madame Sipyágin began to talk about Kólya; she even began to assure Nezhdánoff that her sole reason for wishing to become more closely acquainted with him was that she might have a serious talk with him about her son—in general, to learn his ideas on the subject of educating Russian children. The suddenness with which this desire had arisen in her might have appeared somewhat strange. But the point did not lie in the least in what Valentína Mikhaílovna said, but in the fact that a sort of sensual impulse had overtaken her—the imperative neces-

sity of subjugating, of bringing to her feet this recalcitrant head, had cropped up in her. . . .

But at this point we must turn back for a little.

Valentína Mikhaílovna was the daughter of a very shallow-brained and not dashing general with one star, and a clasp for fifty years of service,—and of an extremely intriguing and crafty little Russian, endowed, like many of her compatriots, with an extremely simple-minded and stupid appearance, from which she contrived to extract the utmost possible profit. Valentína Mikhaílovna's parents were not wealthy; yet she had got into the Smólny Convent,[1] where, although she was regarded as a republican, she was prominent and held in good esteem, because she studied diligently and behaved herself in an exemplary manner. On graduating from the Smólny Institute, she settled down, in company with her mother—(her brother had gone off to the country; the general, with his star and his clasp, was already dead)—in a neat but very cold apartment: when people talked in that apartment, steam could be seen issuing from their mouths; Valentína Mikhaílovna laughed, and declared that it was "as it is in church." She bravely endured all the discomforts of a

[1] The most fashionable and select of the Government Institutes for the education of girls from aristocratic families: in St. Petersburg.—TRANSLATOR.

poor, circumscribed existence:—she had a wonderfully even temper. With her mother's aid she succeeded in keeping up her acquaintances and connections, and making new ones; every one spoke of her, even in the highest circles, as a very charming, very well-educated, and very decorous young girl. Valentína Mikhaílovna had several suitors; from among them all she chose Sipyágin, and made him love her very simply, promptly, and cleverly. . . . . Moreover, he speedily comprehended that he would not be able to find himself any better wife. She was clever, not ill-tempered . . . good-tempered rather, in reality cold and indifferent . . . . and never admitted the idea that any one could remain indifferent to her. Valentína Mikhaílovna was permeated with that special grace which is peculiar to "charming" egotists:—that grace contains neither poetry nor genuine sensibility, but does contain softness, sympathy, even tenderness. Only one must not thwart these fascinating egotists: they are greedy of power, and will not tolerate independence in others. Women like Madame Sipyágin arouse and agitate inexperienced and passionate men; they themselves love regularity and tranquillity of life. It is easy for them to be virtuous—they are cool-headed; but the constant desire to command, to attract, and to please imparts to them mobility and brilliancy: they have a strong will—and their very witchery depends

in part upon that strong will. . . . It is difficult for a man to resist, when little flames of apparently involuntary secret tenderness begin to attack such a dazzling, inaccessible creature; he waits in the expectation that the time may at any moment arrive when the ice will melt; but the brilliant ice merely sparkles with rays of light and does not melt, and it can never be disturbed!

It amounted to very little that Madame Sipyágin should flirt: she knew very well that she was, and could be, in no danger whatever. And, nevertheless, to make some one else's eyes alternately dim and flash, some one else's cheeks grow hot with desire and terrors, some one else's voice tremble and break, to disturb some one else's soul —oh, how sweet that was to *her* soul! How joyful it was to recall late at night, as she laid herself down in her pure bed for untroubled slumber,— to recall all those agitated words and glances and sighs. With what a satisfied smile did she then retreat completely into herself, into the conscious sensation of her inaccessibility, of her impregnability—and condescendingly surrender herself to the legitimate caresses of her well-trained husband! It was so agreeable that she even was touched at times, and was ready to do a good deed to help her neighbour. . . . Once upon a time she had founded a tiny almshouse after the secretary at one of the Embassies, who was madly in love with her, had tried to cut his throat! She

had prayed sincerely for him, although religious feeling had been weak in her from her earliest years.

So she chatted with Nezhdánoff, and endeavoured in every possible way to subjugate him "under her feet." She admitted him to her company, she even appeared to open her heart to him, and with pretty curiosity, with semi-maternal tenderness, watched this far from homely, and interesting and surly radical gently and awkwardly advance to meet her. A day, an hour, a minute later, and the whole thing would vanish, leaving no trace—but for the moment, she found it jolly, somewhat ridiculous, rather bothersome, —and even a little sad. Having forgotten his birth, and aware that that sort of attention is prized by lonely, shy men, Valentína Mikhaílovna undertook to interrogate Nezhdánoff about his youth, his family. . . But instantaneously divining, from his sharp and embarrassed replies, that she had got herself into a scrape, Valentína Mikhaílovna tried to efface her mistake, and became a trifle more expansive with him. . . . Thus does a blooming rose, in the languid heat of noonday, open out its fragrant petals, which the invigorating coolness of the night will soon close up and twist together again.

But she did not succeed in effacing her mistake altogether.—Touched on his sore spot, Nezhdánoff could no longer feel confidence as before.

The bitterness which he always bore about with him, which he always felt in the depths of his soul, began to stir again; his democratic suspicions and reproaches awoke once more.—"I did not come hither for this,"—he said to himself. Pákhlin's jesting injunctions recurred to his mind . . . . and he availed himself of the first moment of silence, rose from his seat, made a curt bow, and left the room—"very stupidly," as he involuntarily whispered to himself.

His agitation did not escape Valentína Mikhaílovna . . . but judging from the smile wherewith she watched him, she interpreted his confusion in a manner advantageous to herself.

In the billiard-room Nezhdánoff came upon Marianna. She was standing with her back to a window not far from the door of the boudoir, with her hands tightly clasped. Her face lay in a shadow that was almost black; but her bold eyes stared so interrogatively, so persistently at Nezhdánoff, her compressed lips expressed so much suspicion, such insulting pity, that he stopped short in perplexity. . . . .

"Do you wish to say anything to me?"—he involuntarily said.

Marianna did not immediately reply.

"No . . . or, yes; I do. Only not now."

"When?"

"Wait. Perhaps—to-morrow; perhaps—never.

You see, I know you very little—just what sort of a man you are."

"But,"—began Nezhdánoff,—"it has sometimes seemed to me .... that between us ....."

"And you do not know me at all,"—broke in Marianna.—"So, wait. To-morrow, perhaps. But now I must go to my .... mistress. Farewell until to-morrow."

Nezhdánoff advanced a couple of paces,—but suddenly turned back.

"Akh, yes! Marianna Vikéntievna .... I have been wanting to ask you: will not you permit me to go with you to the school—to see how you occupy yourself there—before they close it?"

"If you like. . . Only it was not about the school that I wished to speak to you."

"What was it about, then?"

"Farewell until to-morrow,"—repeated Marianna.

But she did not wait until the morrow, and the conversation between her and Nezhdánoff came off that same evening, in one of the linden alleys which began not far from the terrace.

## XIII

She herself was the first to approach him.

"Mr. Nezhdánoff,"—she began, in a hurried voice,—"you appear to be completely bewitched by Valentína Mikhaílovna?"

She turned away without waiting for an answer, and walked down the avenue; and he walked by her side.

"Why do you think so?"—he asked, after waiting a little.

"But is n't it true? If it is not, she has managed badly to-day. I can imagine what pains she took, and how she spread her little nets!"

Nezhdánoff uttered not a word, and only gazed askance at his strange interlocutor.

"Hearken,"—she went on:—"I am not going to dissemble: I do not like Valentína Mikhaílovna—and you know that very well. I may seem unjust to you . . . but you must first consider . . . ."

Marianna's voice broke. She blushed, she became agitated. . . Her agitation always assumed the aspect of ostensible anger.

"You are probably asking yourself,"—she began again,—"'Why does this young lady tell me this?' You must have thought the same thing

when I imparted to you the information . . . . concerning Mr. Markéloff."

She suddenly bent down, plucked a small mushroom, broke it in two, and flung it aside.

"You are mistaken, Marianna Vikéntievna," —said Nezhdánoff:—"on the contrary, I thought that I had inspired you with confidence —and that thought was very pleasant to me."

Nezhdánoff was not speaking the whole truth: that thought had only that moment entered his head.

Marianna instantly cast a glance at him. Up to that moment she had kept persistently turned away from him.

"It was not exactly that you inspired me with confidence,"—she said, as though considering the matter,—"for you are an utter stranger to me. . —But your position and my own are very similar. Both of us are equally unhappy; that is the bond which unites us."

"Are you unhappy?"—inquired Nezhdánoff.

"And you—are not you?"—replied Marianna.

He said nothing.

"Do you know my history?"—she began with animation:—"the history of my father? of his exile?—No? Well, then, you must know that he was arrested, found guilty, deprived of his rank . . . . . and of everything—and exiled to Siberia. Then he died . . . and my mother died also. My uncle, Mr. Sipyágin, my mother's bro-

ther, took charge of me—I am eating his bread—he is my benefactor and—Valentína Mikhaílovna is my benefactress—and I repay them with black ingratitude,—it must be because I have a hard heart—and another man's bread is bitter—and I cannot endure condescending insults—and I will not endure being patronised . . . and I cannot conceal my feelings—and when I am incessantly subjected to pin-pricks I refrain from crying out, merely because I am proud."

As she uttered these fragmentary remarks Marianna walked on faster and faster.

All at once she stopped short.

"Do you know that my aunt, merely with the object of getting rid of me, destines me to that detestable Kallomyeítzeff?—But she knows my convictions—I am a nihilist in her eyes—while he! —Of course he does not like me—you see that I am not handsome—but I may be sold. That, also, is a good deed!"

"Why do you . . . ." Nezhdánoff was beginning—and hesitated.

Marianna instantly glanced at him.

"Why have not I accepted Mr. Markéloff's proposal—you mean to say, don't you? Yes; but what am I to do? He is a good man. But I am not to blame; I do not love him."

Again Marianna walked on ahead, as though desirous of relieving her companion from the ob-

ligation to make any reply to this unexpected avowal.

They both reached the end of the avenue. Marianna turned briskly into a narrow path, which was laid out through a dense spruce-grove, and proceeded along it.—Nezhdánoff followed Marianna.—He felt doubly surprised: the manner in which this strange girl was suddenly talking with candour to him struck him as amazing,—and still more was he astonished that his candour did not in the least surprise him—that he regarded it as natural.

Marianna suddenly wheeled round—and halted in the middle of the path, so that her face was not more than a couple of feet from Nezhdánoff's face, and her eyes pierced directly into his eyes.

"Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—she said,—"do not think that my aunt is wicked. . . No! she is thoroughly—false, she is a comedian, she is fond of posing—she wants to have every one adore her—and worship her, as though she were a saint! She thinks up a cordial remark, and says it to one person,—and then she repeats that same remark to a second and a third person—and always with the same air, as though she had only just thought of it—and in connection with it, she uses her magnificent eyes! She knows herself perfectly well—she knows that she resembles a Madonna, and she loves no one! She pretends that she is always

worrying over Kólya—but all she does is to talk him over with clever people. She wishes no harm to any one . . . she is all benevolence!—But if they were to break all the bones in your body in her presence—she would not care a jot! She would not move a finger to rescue you;—but if it were necessary or profitable to herself . . . then . . . . oh, then!"

Marianna paused. Rancour was choking her; she had made up her mind to set it at liberty, she could not restrain herself—but her speech involuntarily broke off short. Marianna belonged to a peculiar category of unhappy people (they have begun to make their appearance pretty frequently in Russia). . . . Justice satisfies but does not gladden them; while injustice, to which they are frightfully sensitive, stirs them up to the very bottom of the soul.—While she was speaking Nezhdánoff gazed attentively at her; her reddened face, with her slightly dishevelled short hair, and the tremulous twitching of her thin lips, struck him as menacing and significant, —and beautiful. The sunlight, intercepted by the thick network of the branches, lay upon her brow in a slanting golden stain; and that fiery tongue harmonised with the excited expression of her whole countenance, with the widely-opened, fixed, and sparkling eyes, with the burning sound of her voice.

"Tell me,"—Nezhdánoff suddenly asked her,

—" why did you call me unhappy? Do you know anything about my past? "

Marianna nodded her head.

" Yes."

" That is to say . . . . what do you know? Has any one told you about me? "

" I know . . . about your birth."

" You know. . . Who told you? "

" Why, that same person—that same Valentína Mikhaílovna, with whom you are so enchanted. She did not omit to mention in my presence—as a passing remark, after her usual fashion, but still distinctly—not with pity, but as a woman of liberal views, who is above all prejudices—that such and such an accident existed in the life of our new tutor! Pray do not feel surprised: Valentína Mikhaílovna, in the same casual manner and with commiseration, imparts to almost every visitor that ' this sort of an . . . . accident . . exists in the life of my niece: her father was sent to Siberia for taking bribes.' No matter how much of an aristocrat she may consider herself to be, she is simply a scandal-monger and poseuse—that Raphael Madonna of yours! "

" Pray, why is she ' my ' Madonna? " remarked Nezhdánoff.

Marianna turned away, and again proceeded along the path.

" You and she had such a long conversation together,"—she said dully.

"I hardly uttered a single word,"—replied Nezhdánoff:—"she talked the whole time herself."

Marianna walked on in silence. But now the path made a turn to one side; the spruce-grove seemed to open out and reveal ahead a small glade with a hollow weeping birch in the centre, and a circular bench which surrounded the aged tree. Marianna seated herself on this bench; Nezhdánoff placed himself beside her. Over the heads of both long tufts of drooping boughs, covered with tiny green leaves, swayed gently to and fro. Round about among the sparse grass lilies-of-the-valley gleamed whitely, and from the whole glade welled up the fresh fragrance of the young herbage, which agreeably relieved the lungs, still oppressed by resinous exhalations.

"You wish to go with me to inspect the school here,"—began Marianna;—"well, let us go.—Only . . . I do not know. You will not take much satisfaction in it. You have heard: our head teacher is—the deacon. He is a good man, but you cannot imagine what things he talks about to his pupils! Among them is one boy . . . his name is Garásya—he is an orphan, ten years of age—and, just imagine! he studies better than all the rest!"

In suddenly changing the subject of conversation, Marianna herself seemed to undergo a change also: she turned pale and silent, and her

face expressed emotion, as though she were ashamed of all that she had been saying. Obviously, she wished to lead Nezhdánoff to some "question" or other—the school question, the question of the peasants—anything to avoid continuing in their former vein. But he was not in the mood for "questions" at that moment.

"Marianna Vikéntievna,"—he began, "I will say to you frankly: I never expected all this . . . that has taken place between us."—(At the words "taken place" she pricked up her ears a little.)—"It seems to me that we have suddenly come very close together. That is as it should be. We have been advancing toward each other for a long time; only, we have put it into words. —And therefore I will speak to you without concealment.—You find life difficult and painful in this house; but your uncle, although shallow-pated, is, so far as I can judge of him, a humane man? Does not he understand your position, does not he take your part?"

"My uncle? In the first place, he is not a man at all; he is an official—a senator,[1] or a Minister . . . I really do not know what. And, in the second place, . . . I do not care to complain and tell tales unnecessarily: I do not find life here difficult or painful in the least—that is to say, I am not persecuted here; my aunt's little

[1] A member of the Supreme Judicial Court.—TRANSLATOR.

pin-pricks are nothing to me, really . . . I am perfectly free."

Nezhdánoff cast a glance of surprise at Marianna.

"In that case . . . . everything that you have just been telling me . . . ."

"You are at liberty to laugh at me,"—she interposed:—"but if I am unhappy, it is not with my own unhappiness.—It sometimes seems to me that I suffer on behalf of all the oppressed, the poor, the wretched in Russia . . . no, I do not suffer . . . but I am indignant on their behalf, I rage . . . so that I am ready to lay down my life for them. I am unhappy because I am a young lady, a parasite, that I do not know how to do anything—anything whatever! When my father was in Siberia, and my mother and I remained in Moscow,—akh, how I longed to go to him!—and that, not because I either loved or respected him very much—but I did so want to find out for myself, to behold with my own eyes, how the exiles . . . . the persecuted . . . live . . . . And how vexed I was at myself, and at all those calm, well-to-do, satiated people! . . . . And then, when he came back, worn out, broken in health, and began to humble himself, to worry and search . . . akh . . how painful that was! How well it was that he died . . . and my mother also! But I remained alive. . . . To what end? In order to feel that I have a bad disposition, that

I am ungrateful, that no one can get on with me —and that I can do nothing, nothing—for anything or for any one!"

Marianna bent to one side—her hand slipped down on the bench. Nezhdánoff felt very sorry for her; he touched that hanging hand . . . but Marianna immediately jerked it away, not because Nezhdánoff's gesture struck her as improper, but lest he—which God forbid—should think that she was asking for sympathy.

A woman's garment glinted through the boughs of the spruce-grove.

Marianna straightened herself up.—"Look there, your Madonna has sent out her spy. That maid has to keep watch of me, and report to her mistress where I go, and with whom!—My aunt has probably guessed that I am with you,—considers it indecorous—especially after the sentimental scene which she acted out before you. And, in fact, it is time to go home. Let us set out."

Marianna rose; Nezhdánoff also rose from his seat. She glanced at him over her shoulder, and suddenly there flitted across her face an expression which was almost childlike, charming, rather confused.

"I hope you are not angry with me? You do not think that I, too, have been showing off to you?—No, you do not think so,"—she went on, before Nezhdánoff could make her any answer,—

"for you are just such another as myself,—an unhappy being,—and you, also, have a bad disposition, like myself.—And to-morrow we will go together to the school, because now, you know, we are good friends."

When Marianna and Nezhdánoff approached the house, Valentína Mikhaílovna was staring at them through her lorgnette from the elevation of the terrace—and, with her usual gentle smile, was shaking her head; and returning through the open glass door to the drawing-room, where Sipyágin was still sitting over his game of preference, with a toothless neighbour who had dropped in to tea, she said loudly, and in a deliberate drawl, separating syllable from syllable:

"How damp it is out of doors! It is un healthful!"

Marianna exchanged a glance with Nezhdánoff; but Sipyágin, who had just out-trumped his partner, cast at his wife a truly ministerial glance, obliquely and upward across his cheek—and then transferred that same sleepily cold, but penetrating glance to the young pair who had just entered from the dark garden.

## XIV

Two weeks more passed.—Everything went on in its wonted routine. Sipyágin portioned out the daily duties—if not like a minister, then certainly like the director of a department—and bore himself, as before, loftily, humanely, and in a somewhat fastidious manner; Kólya took his lessons; Anna Zakhárovna was tormented with constant, oppressive spite; guests arrived, talked, waged battle at cards—and, to all appearances, were not bored; Valentína Mikhaílovna continued to trifle with Nezhdánoff—although something in the nature of good-natured irony had begun to mingle with her amiability. With Marianna, Nezhdánoff had become definitively on intimate terms—and, to his astonishment, he found that she had a tolerably even temper, and that it was possible to converse with her on every subject without coming into conflict with harsh contradictions.—In her company he twice visited the school,—but at his first visit he became convinced that there was nothing for him to do there. The reverend deacon taught reading and writing not badly, although in old-fashioned style—but at the examinations he propounded somewhat absurd questions; for

example, he one day asked Garásya: "how wilt thou explain the expression: 'the water is dark in the clouds?'"—to which Garásya replied, in accordance with information which must have been derived from the father deacon himself: "It is inexplicable." However, the school was soon closed,—on account of the summer season—until the autumn.—Calling to mind the exhortations of Pákhlin and others, Nezhdánoff endeavoured also to come into close relations with the peasants; but he speedily perceived that he was simply studying them to the extent of his own powers of observation—and not making propaganda at all! He had spent almost all his life in the town,—and between him and the country people there existed a gulf, or a ditch, across which he could in no wise leap. Nezhdánoff had occasion to exchange a few words with Kirílo the sot, and also with "Porpoise" Mendelyéi; but, strange to say, he seemed to feel timid in their presence, and with the exception of a very general and very curt curse, he got nothing from them. Another peasant—his name was Fitiúeff—simply drove him to his wits' end. This peasant had a remarkably energetic, almost brigand-like face. . . "Well, this fellow certainly must be trustworthy!"—said Nezhdánoff to himself. . . And what happened? Fitiúeff turned out to be a landless peasant: the Commune had deprived him of his land because he—a healthy and

even powerful man—*could not* work.—"I can't!"—sobbed Fitiúeff himself, with a deep, inward groan, heaving a long sigh:—"I can't work! kill me!—Or I 'll lay hands on myself!"—And he ended by asking alms—just a little copper for bread. . . And his face was like that of Rinaldo Rinaldi!—Nezhdánoff had no success whatever with the factory-hands; all those young fellows were either frightfully alert or frightfully gloomy . . . and nothing came of Nezhdánoff's efforts with them. In this connection, he wrote a long letter to his friend Sílin, in which he complained bitterly of his own ignorance, and attributed it to his own bad education and abominable æsthetic nature! He suddenly took it into his head that his vocation—in the matter of the propaganda—was to act, not with the living word of mouth, but by writing; but the pamphlets which he planned came to nothing. Everything which he tried to set down on paper produced upon himself the impression of something false, strained, untruthful in tone, in language,—and a couple of times, oh, horrors!—he involuntarily branched off into poetry, or into sceptical, personal effusions. He even made up his mind (an important token of confidence and intimacy!) . . . to speak of his ill-success to Marianna . . . . and again, to his surprise, he found in her sympathy—not for his literary productions, of course—but for that moral malady with which he was suffer-

ing, and which was no stranger to her. Marianna rebelled against æsthetics as strongly as he did;—and was that the real reason why she had not fallen in love with Markéloff and had not married him, that there was not a single trace of that æstheticism in him?—As a matter of course, Marianna did not dare to admit this even to herself; but, after all, only that is strong in us which remains to us ourselves a half-suspected secret.

And so the days ran on—slowly, unevenly, but not tediously.

Something strange took place in Nezhdánoff. He was dissatisfied with himself, with his activity—that is to say, with his lack of activity; his remarks almost always reeked of the gall and virulence of self-flagellation; but in his soul, somewhere, very far within, things were not so bad; he even experienced a certain sense of solace. Whether this was the result of the country tranquillity, the air, the summer, the savoury food, the comfortable existence,—whether it arose from the fact that, for the first time since he was born, it had fallen to his lot to taste the sweetness of contact with a feminine soul—it would be difficult to say; but, in reality, he felt light at heart, although he made complaint—genuine complaint—to his friend Sílin.

But this mood of Nezhdánoff's was suddenly and violently destroyed—in one day.

On the morning of that day he received a note

from Vasíly Nikoláevitch, in which he was ordered, in company with Markéloff,—while awaiting further instructions,—instantly to make acquaintance and come to an agreement with that Solómin who has already been mentioned, and with a certain merchant Golúshkin, an Old Ritualist,[1] who resided in S. This letter thoroughly disquieted Nezhdánoff: he detected in it a reproof for his inaction. The bitterness which, all that time, had been seething in his words alone, now rose once more in the depths of his soul.

Kallomyeítzeff came to dinner, preoccupied and irritable.—"Imagine,"—he cried, in a voice that was almost tearful,—"what a horror I have just read in the newspaper:—"my friend, my dear Mikhaílo, the Prince of Servia, has been murdered in Belgrade by some miscreants!—To what lengths will these Jacobins and revolutionists proceed, if we do not put a firm limit to them!"—Sipyágin "permitted himself to remark," that that abominable murder had not, in all probability, been committed by Jacobins—"who are not allowed in Servia,"—but by men of the Karageórgevitch party, the enemies of the Obrenóvitches. . . . But Kallomyeítzeff would hear to nothing, and in the same tearful voice he again began to narrate how the deceased prince

[1] The Old Ritualists, or schismatics (raskólniki), are the sect which did not accept the necessary corrections of errors in the Scriptures and church service-books, made during the reign of Peter the Great's father.—TRANSLATOR.

had loved him, and what a gun he had given him! . . . . Gradually waxing angry, and rising into a passion, Kallomyeítzeff turned from foreign Jacobins to domestic nihilists and socialists—and, at last, burst out into a regular invective. Grasping a large white roll in both hands, in fashionable style, and breaking it in two over his plate of soup, as the genuine Parisians do at the "Café Riche,"—he announced a desire to smash, to pulverise all those who offered opposition . . . to anything or anybody whatsoever! . . . That was precisely the way in which he expressed himself.—"It is time, high time!"—he kept repeating, as he put his spoon into his mouth:—"it is time, high time!" he insisted, as he held up his wine-glass to the servant who was pouring out the sherry. He alluded reverently to the great Moscow publicists—and *Ladislas, notre bon et cher Ladislas,* never left his tongue.—And all the while he kept fixing his gaze on Nezhdánoff, exactly as though he were saying familiarly to him with it.—"Here, take that! here 's a blow for thee! that 's aimed at thee! And here 's another!"—At last, the latter lost his patience—and began to retort—in a voice which trembled somewhat, it is true (of course, not with timidity), and was rather hoarse; he began to defend the hopes, the principles, the ideals of the young generation. Kallomyeítzeff instantly began to squeak—wrath always manifested itself in his case by a falsetto tone—and be-

came rude. Sipyágin majestically took Nezhdánoff's part; Valentína Mikhaílovna also agreed with her husband; Anna Zakhárovna began to divert Kólya's attention, and hurled angry glances, at random, from beneath her over-hanging cap; Marianna did not stir, and seemed to be petrified.

But all at once, on hearing the name of Ladislas uttered for the twentieth time, Nezhdánoff flared up thoroughly, and bringing his palm down on the table with a bang, exclaimed:

"So that 's your authority!—As though we did not know what sort of a fellow that Ladislas is!—He is a born instigator,—and nothing more!"

"A . . . a . . . ah . . . so that 's it . . . that 's . . . what you 're driving at!"—groaned Kallomyeítzeff, stammering with rage. . . . "You permit yourself to speak thus of a man whom personages like Count Bismarck and Prince Kovrízhkin respect!"

Nezhdánoff shrugged his shoulders.—"A fine recommendation: Prince Kovrízhkin, that lackey-enthusiast. . . . ."

"Ladislas is my friend,"—shrieked Kallomyeítzeff,—"he is my comrade—and I . . ."

"So much the worse for you,"—interrupted Nezhdánoff;—"that signifies that you share his mode of thought, and so my words refer also to you."

Kallomyeítzeff turned deadly pale with rage.

—"Wha . . . . wha-at? What do you mean? How dare you? You ou . . . ought . . . to be immediately . . . ."

"What is it your pleasure to do with me *immediately?*"—interrupted Nezhdánoff for the second time, with ironical politeness.

God knows how this fray between the two enemies would have ended, had not Sipyágin put a stop to it in its very inception. Raising his voice, and assuming a mien, as to which it cannot be said whether there predominated in it the importance of the statesman or the dignity of the master of the house—he announced, with firm composure, that he did not wish to hear such intemperate expressions at his table; that he had long since established a rule (he corrected himself, "a sacred rule"), for himself, to respect every sort of conviction, but only on condition—(here he raised his forefinger, adorned with a signet-ring), that they should be confined within certain limits of propriety and decorum; that if he, on his side, could not help condemning in Mr. Nezhdánoff a certain intemperance of language, which, moreover, was to be excused on account of his youth, on the other hand, neither could he lend his approbation to Mr. Kallomyeítzeff in the harshness of his attack on persons of the opposite camp—a harshness which was to be explained, however, by his zeal for the public welfare.

"Beneath my roof,"—thus he wound up,—

"beneath the roof of the Sipyágins there are no Jacobins, no instigators, but there are only conscientious people, who, one of these days will embrace one another, and will, infallibly, end by shaking hands with one another!"

Nezhdánoff and Kallomyeítzeff both relapsed into silence—but they did not shake hands with each other. On the contrary, never before had they felt such a strong mutual hatred. The dinner ended in a disagreeable and awkward silence; Sipyágin made an effort to narrate a diplomatic anecdote—but abandoned it half-way through. Marianna stared persistently at her plate. She did not wish to exhibit the sympathy aroused in her by Nezhdánoff's remarks, not out of pusillanimity—oh, no; but the first thing of all was, not to betray herself to Madame Sipyágin. And, as a matter of fact, Madame Sipyágin never took her eyes off of her—off of her and Nezhdánoff. His unexpected outburst had at first astonished the clever lady; afterward, a sudden light seemed to dawn upon her—and so forcibly, that she whispered involuntarily:—"Ah!" . . . She suddenly divined that Nezhdánoff had turned away from her, that same Nezhdánoff, who so recently had been falling into her clutches. Something had happened. . . Was not Marianna responsible? Yes, it certainly was Marianna. . . He pleased her . . . yes, and he . . . .

"I must take measures," so she concluded her

meditations, and, in the meantime, Kallomyeítzeff was choking with rage. Even while playing at preference, two hours later, he uttered the words: " I pass! " or " I draw! " with an aching heart—and in his voice the dull tremolo of affront was audible, although he made a show of " scorning it."—Sipyágin alone was, properly speaking, extremely satisfied with himself, with this entire scene. He had had an opportunity to display the force of his eloquence, and of stilling the rising storm. . . . He knew the Latin tongue, and Virgil's phrase, " *Quos ego!* " was not unfamiliar to him. He did not consciously compare himself to Neptune; but somehow, he called him to mind in a sympathetic way.

## XV

As soon as he found it possible, Nezhdánoff betook himself to his chamber, and locked himself in!—He did not wish to see any one—not any one whatever, except Marianna. Her room was situated at the very end of a long corridor, which intersected the entire upper story. Nezhdánoff had entered it only once—and that for only a few moments; but it seemed to him, that she would not be offended with him if he were to knock at her door, that she even wished to talk over matters with him. It was already rather late, about ten o'clock; the host and hostess, after the scene which had taken place at dinner, had not thought it right to disturb him, and had continued to play cards with Kallomyeítzeff. Valentína Mikhaílovna inquired for Marianna a couple of times as she, also, had disappeared after dinner.—"Where is Marianna Vikéntievna?"—she asked, first in Russian, then in French, not addressing herself to any one in particular, but rather to the walls, as very much surprised people are wont to do; but she soon became engrossed in her game.

Nezhdánoff paced up and down his room several times, then went down the corridor, toward

Marianna's door, and knocked softly. There was no response. He knocked again—he tried to open the door. . . It turned out to be locked. But before he could regain his own room, and seat himself on a chair, his own door creaked faintly, and Marianna's voice made itself heard.

"Alexyéi Dmítritch, was it *you* who came to my room?"

He instantly sprang up and rushed into the corridor; Marianna was standing in front of the door, with a candle in her hand, pale and motionless.

"Yes . . . it was I . . ." he whispered.

"Come,"—she replied, and went down the corridor; but before reaching the end, she halted, and thrust open with her hand a low door. Nezhdánoff beheld a small, almost empty room.—"It is better for us to come in here, Alexyéi Dmítritch, no one will disturb us here." Nezhdánoff obeyed, Marianna set the candle down on the window-sill and turned to Nezhdánoff.

"I understand why you wished to see me, in particular,"—she began:—"You find life in this house very difficult—and so do I."

"Yes; I wanted to see you, Marianna Vikéntievna,"—replied Nezhdánoff;—"but I have not found things difficult here, since I came to know you well."

Marianna smiled thoughtfully.

"Thank you, Alexyéi Dmítritch—but tell me,

is it possible that you intend to remain here after all these outrageous proceedings?"

"I think I shall not be allowed to remain here, —I shall be dismissed!"—replied Nezhdánoff.

"And you will not resign of your own accord?"

"Of my own accord. . . . No."

"Why?"

"Do you wish to know the truth? Because *you* are here."

Marianna bowed her head, and retreated a little further into the depths of the room.

"And, more than that,"—pursued Nezhdánoff,—"I am *bound* to remain here. You know nothing—but I wish, I feel that I ought to tell you everything."—He stepped up to Marianna, and seized her hand.—She did not take it away—and merely looked him in the face.—"Listen!" —he exclaimed with a sudden, mighty impulse.— "Listen to me!"—And immediately, without seating himself on one of the two or three chairs which were in the room, and continuing to stand in front of Marianna, and to hold her hand, Nezhdánoff with enthusiasm, with warmth, with an eloquence which was unexpected even to himself, communicated to Marianna his plans, his intentions, the reason he had accepted Sipyágin's proposal,—all his connections, acquaintances, his past, everything which he had been wont to conceal, which he had never told to any one! He

mentioned the letters he had received from Vasíly Nikoláevitch, everything—even Sílin!—he talked hurriedly, without hesitation, without the slightest faltering—as though he reproached himself for not having hitherto initiated Marianna into all his secrets—as though he were excusing himself to her.—She listened to him attentively, eagerly; at first she was surprised. . . But that sensation immediately vanished. Gratitude, pride, devotion, decision—was what filled her face to overflowing. Her face, her eyes beamed; she laid her other hand on Nezhdánoff's hand—her lips opened in ecstasy. . . She had suddenly grown terribly beautiful.

He stopped at last—glanced at her, and it seemed as though he beheld for the first time *that* face, which was also so dear and so familiar to him.

He heaved a profound, a mighty sigh. . .

"Akh, how well I have done to tell you all!"—his lips were barely able to articulate.

"Yes, you have done well . . you have done well!"—she repeated, also in a whisper. She involuntarily imitated him—and her voice died away.—"And, of course, you know," she went on,—"that I am at your disposal, that I also wish to be of use in your affair, that I am ready to do everything that is necessary, to go anywhere that I may be ordered, that I always, with all my soul, have wished the same as you. . ."

She, too, fell silent. One word more—and tears of emotion would have gushed from her eyes. Her whole sturdy being had suddenly become as soft as wax. The thirst for activity, for sacrifice, for immediate sacrifice—that was what was causing her to languish.

Some one's footsteps approached the door—cautious, swift, light footsteps. Marianna suddenly drew herself up, released her hands—and immediately underwent a complete change, and grew merry. A scornful, even an audacious expression flitted across her face.

"I know who is eavesdropping on us at this moment,"—she said so loudly that her every word re-echoed plainly in the corridor—"Madame Sipyágin is listening to us . . . but I care nothing for that."

The rustle of footsteps ceased.

"So what now?"—Marianna turned to Nezhdánoff; "what am I to do? how can I help you? Speak . . . . speak quickly! What am I to do?"

"What?"—said Nezhdánoff.—"I do not yet know myself. . . . I have received a note from Markéloff. . ."

"When? When?"

"This evening. I must go to-morrow with him to Solómin, at the works."

"Yes . . . yes. . . . He 's a splendid man,—Markéloff. There 's a real friend!"

"The same as myself?"

Marianna looked Nezhdánoff straight in the face.

"No—not the same."

"How then?"

She suddenly turned away.

"Akh! but is it possible that you do not know what you have become to me, and what I feel at this moment. . . ."

Nezhdánoff's heart suddenly began to beat violently, and his gaze involuntarily dropped. That young girl, who had fallen in love with him, —with him, a homeless wretch,—who was trusting herself to him, who was ready to follow him, to advance with him to one and the same goal,—that splendid girl—Marianna—at that moment became for Nezhdánoff the incarnation of everything good, everything upright on the earth—the incarnation of family, love, the love of sister, of wife, which he had never known,—the incarnation of his native land, of happiness, of struggle, of freedom!

He raised his head—and beheld her eyes again directed upon him. . . .

Oh, how their bright, glorious gaze penetrated into the very depths of his soul!

"So,"—he began in an uncertain voice,—"I set out to-morrow. . . . And when I come back, I will tell . . . . you . . ." (he suddenly found it embarrassing to call Marianna "you")—"I

will tell you what I have learned, what has been decided upon. Henceforth, everything that I shall do, everything that I shall think—everything, everything, shall first be known to . . . . thee."

"Oh, my friend!"—exclaimed Marianna—and again she grasped his hand. "I make thee the same promise!"

That "thee" she uttered as easily and as simply as though it were not possible to do otherwise—as though it were a comradely, "thou."

"And may I see the letter?"

"Here it is, here."

Marianna glanced over the letter, and raised her eyes to him, almost with reverence.

"Do they impose such weighty commissions on thee?"

He smiled at her by way of reply, and thrust the letter into his pocket.

"It is strange,"—he said:—"here we have made a confession of love to each other—we love each other—and there has not been a word of that between us."

"Why should there be?"—whispered Marianna, and suddenly flung herself on his neck, and pressed her head to his shoulder. . . . But they did not even kiss each other—that would have been commonplace and awkward, for some reason or other—at least, that was the way they both

felt about it—and they immediately parted, with a mutual warm pressure of the hand.

Marianna returned for the candle, which she had left on the window-sill of the empty room—and only then did something in the nature of surprise overwhelm her. She extinguished the light, and, in profound darkness, swiftly slipped along the corridor, returned to her chamber, undressed, and lay down in that darkness which was so delightful to her, for some reason or other.

## XVI

On the following morning, when Nezhdánoff awoke, he not only did not feel any confusion at the recollection of what had taken place on the preceding day,—but, on the contrary, he was filled with a certain good and sober joy, as though he had done something which, in reality, he ought to have done long ago. Asking leave of absence for a couple of days from Mr. Sipyágin, who gave immediate, but stern consent to his absence —Nezhdánoff went off to Markéloff. Before his departure, he contrived to see Marianna.— She, also, was not in the least ashamed, wore a calm and decided look, and coolly called him *thou*. She was disturbed merely over what he would hear from Markéloff, and begged him to tell her everything.

"That is a matter of course,"—replied Nezhdánoff.

"And, in fact,"—he said to himself,—"what occasion is there for us to worry? In our friendship personal feeling has played a secondary part—yet we have become irrevocably bound together. In the name of the cause? Yes, in the name of the cause!"

Thus thought Nezhdánoff,—and he himself did not suspect how much of truth—and of untruth—there was in his thoughts.

He found Markéloff in the same languid and morose frame of mind. When they had dined, after a fashion, on something or other, they set out in the tarantás with which we are already acquainted—(Markéloff's horse was still lame, and they had hired a second side horse, which was very young, and had never yet worked in harness, from a peasant)—to the big cotton-spinning factory of merchant Falyéeff, where Solómin lived. Nezhdánoff's curiosity was excited; he was very anxious to make closer acquaintance with the man, concerning whom he had heard so much of late. Solómin had been forewarned; as soon as the two travellers drew up at the gate of the factory, and mentioned their names, they were immediately conducted to the plain little wing occupied by the "mechanician-superintendent." He himself was in the main building of the factory; while one of the factory-hands ran to fetch him, Nezhdánoff and Markéloff had time to step to the window and look about them. The factory was, obviously, in a most thriving condition, and overwhelmed with work; thence emanated a brisk hum and roar of incessant activity: the machinery panted and pounded, the wheels whirred, the straps slapped, wheelbarrows, casks, laden carts rolled past and vanished from sight; shouts of

command, the clangour of bells and whistles rang out; workmen, in belted blouses, their long hair confined with a strap, working-girls, in print gowns, ran hurriedly past; horses in harness were moving about. Human force, a thousand men strong, roared round about as taut as a string. Everything was proceeding in an orderly, rational manner, in full swing; not only was there no elegance or punctuality observable, there was not even cleanliness anywhere or in anything; on the contrary—in every direction one was struck with the negligence, dirt, soot; here a window-pane was broken, there the plaster had peeled off, boards were missing, a gate yawned wide-open; a huge, black pool, with an iridescent scum of putrid matter stood in the middle of the main courtyard; further on, heaps of discarded bricks reared themselves aloft; fragments of linden-bast sacking, of raw-hide wrappers, packing-cases, ropes, were lying about; shaggy dogs were roaming around with hollow bellies, and not even barking; in one corner, under the fence, sat a little boy, four years of age, with a huge belly, and dishevelled head, all smeared with soot,—there he sat and wept desperately, as though abandoned by the whole world; alongside him, smeared with the same soot, a sow, surrounded by her piebald litter, was devouring cabbage-stalks; ragged underclothing was dangling on a line which had been stretched—and what stench, what a fetid

atmosphere there was everywhere!—A Russian factory—in short; not a German or a French manufactory.

Nezhdánoff cast a glance at Markéloff.

"I have been told so much about Solómin's superior capacities,"—he began,—"that, I must confess, this disorder surprises me; I had not expected it."

"There 's no disorder here,"—replied Markéloff, gruffly,—"but only Russian slovenliness. Nevertheless, the business earns millions! And he has to adapt himself to old customs,—and to business,—and to the owner himself. Have you any idea what Falyéeff is like?"

"None whatever."

"He 's the worst skinflint in Moscow. In one word—a miserly curmudgeon."

At that moment Solómin entered the room. Nezhdánoff was obliged to undergo a disenchantment, just as he had with regard to the factory. At first sight, Solómin produced the impression of being a Finn, or, rather, a Swede. He was lofty of stature, tow-headed, thin, broad-shouldered; he had a long, yellow face, a short, broad nose, very small greenish eyes, a calm gaze, thick lips which curled upward; white teeth, also large, and a cleft chin barely overgrown with down. He was dressed like a workman, a stoker; on his body he wore an old pea-jacket with pendent pockets, on his head an oil-cloth crushed cap, on his neck

a woollen scarf, on his feet tarred boots. He was accompanied by a man of forty, in a plain, long, peasant coat, with remarkably mobile, gipsy face and piercing, coal-black eyes, with which, as soon as he entered, he took a comprehensive survey of Nezhdánoff. . . . He already knew Markéloff. His name was Pável: he was regarded as Solómin's factotum.

Solómin approached his two visitors in a leisurely manner, pressed the hand of each of them with his calloused, bony hand, took out of the table-drawer a sealed packet, and handed it, still in silence, to Pável, who immediately left the room. Then he stretched and yawned; flinging his cap off the nape of his neck to a distance, with one sweep of his hand, he seated himself on a small painted wooden chair, and motioning Markéloff and Nezhdánoff to a divan of the same sort, he said:—"Pray, be seated!"

Markéloff first introduced Solómin and Nezhdánoff; Solómin immediately gave the latter his hand again.—Then Markéloff began to talk of "the cause," mentioned Vasíly Nikoláevitch's letter. Nezhdánoff gave the letter to Solómin. While he read it, attentively and without haste, moving his eyes from line to line, Nezhdánoff looked at him. Solómin was sitting near the window; the sun, which was already low in the sky, brilliantly illuminated his tanned, slightly perspiring face, his blond, dusty hair, kindling in

it a multitude of golden points. His nostrils quivered and became inflated as he read, and his lips moved as though he were articulating every word; he held the letter tightly and high up, with both hands. All this pleased Nezhdánoff,—God knows why. Solómin returned the letter to Nezhdánoff, smiled at him, and again began to listen to Markéloff. The latter talked and talked—and at last relapsed into silence.

"Do you know what,"—began Solómin, and his voice, which was rather hoarse, but young and strong, also pleased Nezhdánoff,—"I do not feel quite at my ease here; let us go to your house—it is only seven versts away. You came in a tarantás, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Well .... there will be room for me. In an hour my labours are over, and I shall be free. Then we will discuss. You are also free?"—he asked, turning to Nezhdánoff.

"Until day after to-morrow."

"Very good, indeed. We will spend the night with him.—May we, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch?"

"What a question! Of course you may."

"Well—I 'll be ready directly. Only give me a chance to clean myself up a bit."

"And how are things going in your factory?"—inquired Markéloff, significantly. Solómin glanced aside.

"We will talk that over,"—he said again.—

"Wait . . . . I 'll be ready directly . . I have forgotten something."

He left the room. If it had not been for the good impression which he had produced on Nezhdánoff, the latter, probably would have thought, and even, perhaps, would have asked Markéloff: "Is n't he crawling out of it?" But nothing of that sort entered his head.

An hour later, at the moment when, from all the stories of the huge building, the noisy throng of work-people were descending by all the staircases and pouring out through all the doors,—the tarantás in which sat Markéloff, Nezhdánoff, and Solómin drove out through the gate upon the highway.

"Vasíly Feodótitch! Are we to act?"—shouted after Solómin, Pável, whom he had escorted to the gate.

"Wait a bit," . . . replied Solómin.—"That refers to a piece of night-work,"—he explained to his comrades.

They arrived at Borzyónkovo; they supped—chiefly for the sake of appearances—and then lit their cigars and began their discussions, those nocturnal, interminable, Russian discussions, which in such proportions and in such a form can hardly be characteristic of any other race whatsoever. Moreover, even here, Solómin did not justify Nezhdánoff's expectations. He talked remarkably little . . . so little, that one might almost

say that he remained persistently mute; but he listened assiduously, and if he did utter any judgment or remark, it was to the point, and of weight, and very brief. It appeared that Solómin did not believe in the imminent approach of a revolution in Russia; but, not wishing to force his opinions on others, he did not prevent their making the effort, and he looked on, not from afar, but from one side. He was well acquainted with the Petersburg revolutionists—and, to a certain degree, sympathised with them—for he himself was one of the people; but he understood the involuntary absence of that same people, without which "you will not be able to do anything," and which must undergo a long course of preparation,—and not of the same sort or with the same object as those. Hence, he held himself aloof, not as a crafty man or a shuffler, but as a young fellow with sense, who does not wish to ruin himself or others for nothing.—But as for listening—why not listen—and even learn, if the opportunity should present itself? Solómin was the only son of a chanter; he had five sisters—all married to priests and deacons; but he, with the consent of his father, a dignified and sober man, had abandoned the ecclesiastical seminary, had begun to study mathematics, and had conceived a special passion for mechanics; he had got a place in the factory of an Englishman, who had loved him like a son—and had furnished him with means

to go to Manchester, where he had remained two years, and had learned the English language. He had entered the factory of the Moscow merchant quite recently, and although he was strict with the factory-hands,—because he had learned that method by observation in England,—yet he enjoyed their good-will; "he was one of themselves, you see!" His father was greatly pleased with him, called him "accurate," and his sole regret was that his son was not inclined to marry.

In the course of the nocturnal discussion at Markéloff's, Solómin, as we have already said, maintained an almost uninterrupted silence; but when Markéloff undertook to expatiate upon the hopes which he founded on the factory workmen, Solómin, according to his wont, laconically remarked that "our factory-hands in Russia are not like those abroad—they are the quietest sort of folks."

"And the peasants?"—asked Markéloff.

Solómin smiled.

"Seek and ye shall find."

He smiled almost incessantly—and his smile, also, was a guileless sort of smile, but thoughtless, like everything else about him.—He treated Nezhdánoff in a peculiar manner: the young student aroused sympathy, almost tenderness in him.

In the course of that same nocturnal conversation, Nezhdanoff suddenly waxed warm, and became excited; Solómin quietly rose to his feet,

and traversing the whole length of the room with his long stride, shut the small window which stood open obove Nezhdánoff's head. . . .

"I 'm afraid you will take cold in your head," —he said good-naturedly, in reply to the orator's astonished look.

Nezhdánoff began to interrogate him as to the nature of the socialistic ideas which he was endeavouring to introduce into the factory intrusted to him, and as to whether he intended to arrange matters in such a way that the workmen should share in the profits?

"My dear soul!"—replied Solómin—"we have set up a school, and a small hospital—and the proprietor fought against them like a bear!"

Once only Solómin got seriously angry, and thumped his mighty fist on the table in such wise, that everything on it danced, not excluding the forty-pound weight, which sought refuge near the inkstand. They had told him about some piece of injustice in the law-courts, about the oppression of a workman's guild. . . .

But when Markéloff and Nezhdánoff undertook to say, how it was proper to "set to work," how their plan was to be put into action, Solómin continued to listen with curiosity, even with respect—but he himself did not utter a single word. This conversation of theirs lasted until four o'clock.—And what all did they not discuss! Markéloff, among other things, secretly hinted at

that indefatigable traveller, Kislyakóff, at his letters, which were becoming more and more interesting; he promised to show several of them to Nezhdánoff, and even to give him some to take home with him, as they were very long, and written in a not very legible hand; and, in addition, they contained a great deal of learning, and there were even verses here and there—but not any frivolous verses—and with a socialistic tendency.—From Kislyakóff Markéloff passed on to soldiers, to adjutants, to Germans—and, at last, talked until he reached the artillery articles; Nezhdánoff referred to the antagonism which existed between Heine and Prudhomme, to realism in art; and Solómin listened—listened, observed, smoked,—and without ever ceasing to smile, without uttering a single witty word, he seemed to comprehend better than any of them, in what the whole gist of the matter consisted.

The clock struck four. . . Nezhdánoff and Markéloff could hardly stand on their feet with weariness—but Solómin never showed a trace of fatigue!—The friends parted; but before they did so it was unanimously agreed that on the following day they should go to the town, to the Old Ritualist merchant Golúshkin to make propaganda; Golúshkin himself was very zealous—and had promised proselytes! Solómin ventured to express a doubt: was it worth while to visit Golúshkin? But afterward he agreed that it was.

## XVII

MARKÉLOFF'S guests were still asleep when a messenger presented himself to him, with a letter from his sister, Madame Sipyágin.—In that letter Valentína Mikhaílovna spoke to him about some domestic trifles, asked him to send her a book which he had taken away—and, by the way, in a postscript, she imparted to him an "amusing" bit of news: his former flame, Marianna, had fallen in love with the tutor Nezhdánoff—and the tutor with her; and she, Valentína Mikhaílovna was not repeating gossip,—but had beheld it with her own eyes, and had heard it with her own ears. Markéloff's face grew blacker than night . . . . but he uttered not a word;—he ordered that the book be given to the messenger,—and, catching sight of Nezhdánoff, who was descending the stairs from the upper story, he greeted him in the usual manner—he even gave him the packet of Kislyakóff's epistles, which he had promised;—but he did not remain with him, and went off "to see to affairs about the place."—Nezhdánoff returned to his room and ran through the letters which had been given to him: in them the young propagandist talked continu-

ally of himself, of his convulsive activity; according to his statements, in the course of the last month he had raced across eleven districts, had been in nine towns, twenty-two villages, fifty-three hamlets, one farm, and eight factories; sixteen nights he had spent in hay-mows, one night in a stable, one, even, in a cow-stall (here he remarked in parenthesis, with a *nota bene,* that the fleas had not bothered him); he had made his way into the earth-huts, the barracks of the workingmen, everywhere he had taught, exhorted, distributed little books, collected information on the fly; some persons he had jotted down on the spot, others he had impressed on his memory, according to the latest system of mnemonics; he had written fourteen long letters, twenty-eight short ones, and eighteen notes, four of them in pencil, one in blood, one in soot diluted with water; and all this he had succeeded in doing because he had learned how to portion out his time systematically, taking as his guides Quintin Johnson, Sverlítzky, Karelius, and other journalists and article-writers. —Then he talked some more about himself, about his star, about precisely how and in what particulars he had supplemented Fourier's theory of the passions; he asserted that he had been the first to seek out "the soil," definitively, that "he would not pass through the world without leaving a trace behind him,"—that he himself was amazed that he, a youth of two-and-twenty, had already

solved all the problems of life and science—and that he would turn Russia upside down, he would even " give it a shaking-up! "—Dixi!!—he added at the end of the line.—This word—" dixi " . . frequently recurred in Kislyakóff's letters, and always with two exclamation points. One of the letters contained a socialistic poem, addressed to a young girl, and beginning:

Love not me—but the idea!

Nezhdánoff was inwardly amazed, not so much by Mr. Kislyakóff's self-boastfulness, as at Markéloff's honest good-nature . . . . but he immediately reflected: " away with æsthetics! even Mr. Kislyakóff may prove useful! "—All three friends met in the dining-room at tea; but the wordy discussion of the preceding evening was not renewed between them.—None of them felt inclined to talk—but Solómin alone maintained a composed silence; while Nezhdánoff and Markéloff seemed to be inwardly perturbed.

After tea they set out for the town; Markéloff's old servant, as he sat on the porch, accompanied his former master with his customary dejected gaze.

Merchant Golúshkin,—whose acquaintance Nezhdánoff was about to make,—was the son of a tradesman, who had acquired wealth in the hardware business, a member of the Feodosian sect,

of the Old Ritualists.[1] He himself had not augmented his father's property, for he was, as has been stated, a gay blade, an epicurean, after the Russian manner—and possessed no gift whatever of combination in business matters. He was a man of forty years of age, decidedly obese and homely, pock-marked, with small, pig eyes; he talked very fast, and got tangled up, as it were, in his words, flourished his hands, danced about on his legs, burst out laughing . . . . in general, produced the impression of a dull-witted, spoiled, and extremely conceited fellow. He regarded himself as a cultured man, beeause he dressed in foreign fashion and lived in a free-handed, though slovenly manner, was acquainted with wealthy people,—and went to the theatre, and protected variety actresses, with whom he conversed in a remarkable sort of language which professed to be French. A thirst for popularity was his chief passion; as much as to say:—"Let thy fame resound throughout the world, Golúshkin!" —This same passion, having won the victory over his innate stinginess, had flung him, as he expressed it, not without pride, into the opposition (formerly, he had said simply: "into position,"—but he had been taught better afterward), —had brought him into relations with the nihilists: he proclaimed the most extreme opinions,

[1] For a good description of this and the other Old Ritualist sects, see "L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes," by Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu.—TRANSLATOR.

he jeered at his Old Ritualistic sect, ate prohibited food during fasts, played cards—and drank champagne like water. And he was continually getting out of scrapes:—because, as he said—"I have bought the authorities in every direction where it is necessary; every opening has been stopped up, all mouths are closed, all ears plugged."—He was a widower, and childless; his sister's sons hovered around him with servile trepidation . . . but he cursed them for a pack of uncivilised blockheads and barbarians, and hardly permitted them to come within his sight.—He lived in a large stone house, which was kept up in rather an untidy manner; in some of the rooms there was foreign furniture—and in others, there was nothing but painted chairs, and a sofa covered with oil-cloth. Pictures hung everywhere—and all of them were exceedingly bad: carroty-hued landscapes, and purple sea views—Moller's "The Kiss," fat, naked women with red knees or elbows. Although Golúshkin had no family, a great many menials and parasites roosted under his roof; he did not harbour them out of generosity, but for the same old reason,—a desire for popularity,—and in order that he might have some one whom he could order about, and before whom he could put on airs. "My clients," he was wont to say, when he wanted to throw dust in any one's eyes; he read no books, but he had a capital memory for learned expressions.

The young men found Golúshkin in his study. Clad in a long-tailed paletot, with a cigar in his mouth, he was pretending to read a newspaper. At the sight of them he instantly sprang to his feet, fussed about, turned scarlet, shouted out that the servants were to serve luncheon immediately, put some question or other, laughed at something—and all simultaneously. He knew Markéloff and Solómin; Nezhdánoff was an entirely new person to him. On hearing that he was a student, he shook hands with him again and said:

"Splendid! splendid! some of our own set have arrived . . . . learning is light, ignorance is darkness—my own education leaves much to be desired, but I understand, because I 've been successful!"

It struck Nezhdánoff that Mr. Golúshkin was both timid and easily discomfited, . . and, as a matter of fact, he was exactly that.—"Look out, brother Kapíton, keep up thy dignity!" was his first thought at the sight of every new face. But he speedily recovered himself, and began to talk in the same hurried, thick-tongued way about Vasíly Nikoláevitch, about his character, about the necessity for the pro-pa-gan-da—(he was very familiar with this word, but he pronounced it slowly); he said that he, Golúshkin, had discovered a new, dashing young man, a very trustworthy fellow; that apparently the time was now near at hand, the time was ripe for . . . . for

the lancet (at this, he glanced at Markéloff, who, however, never fluttered an eyelash);—then, addressing himself to Nezhdánoff, he began to portray himself in a style quite equal to that of Kislyakóff, the great correspondent, himself. He, said he, had long ago got out of the category of self-fools,[1] that he knew well the rights of the proletariat (he had memorised this word thoroughly), that, although he himself had retired from business and was engaged in banking operations—for the purpose of augmenting his capital—yet this was only in order that this capital might, at a given moment, serve—to the profit . . . to the profit of the general movement, to the profit—so to speak—of the populace; and that he, Golúshkin, in reality, despised capital! At this point, a servant entered with the appetiser, and Golúshkin clearing his throat significantly, inquired whether they would not like to join him in a glass?—and was himself the first to toss off an overpowering bumper of pepper-brandy.

The guests began on the luncheon.—Golúshkin thrust huge pieces of pressed caviar into his mouth, and drank to match, remarking:—"Pray, gentlemen, take some, I entreat you, 't is a tid-bit'!"

[1] Ostróvsky, the famous dramatic writer, invented this word—*samodur*, self-fool—in his well-known comedy, "Don't Bother about Other People's Troubles" (literally, "Getting Drunk at Another Man's Feast"). It instantly became the popular term to describe a pig-headed, conservative, old-fashioned man.—TRANSLATOR.

Addressing himself once more to Nezhdánoff, he asked him whence he had come, whether he intended to remain long, and where he was residing; and having learned that he was living at Sipyágin's house, he exclaimed:

"I know that gentleman! An empty fellow!" —And thereupon began to revile all landed proprietors of the S. . . . Government, because they not only had nothing of the citizen about them, but also because they were not even conscious of their own interests. . . . Only—strange to say! . . while he was thus abusing them,—his eyes kept roving about, and uneasiness was visible in them.—Nezhdánoff could not quite render himself an account as to what manner of man this was—and why he should be necessary to them. Solómin held his tongue, according to his wont; and Markéloff assumed such a gloomy mien, that Nezhdánoff at last asked him "what was the matter with him?"—To which Markéloff replied that there was nothing the matter with him; but in the sort of tone in which it is customary to answer people when the object is to give them to understand that "there is something the matter—only it is none of your business."—Again Golúshkin began, first to abuse somebody, and then to laud the young generation: "what clever fellows have come up nowadays! Cle-e-ver fellows! Phew!" —Solómin interrupted him with the query: who was that reliable young man whom he had men-

tioned?—and where had he hunted him up? Golúshkin burst out into a hearty laugh, repeated a couple of times: "Well now, you 'll see, you 'll see,"—and began to interrogate him about his factory, and its "rascally" owner, to which Solómin replied in extremely monosyllabic style. Then Golúshkin poured out champagne for all of them—and bending down to Nezhdánoff's ear, he whispered:—"To the republic!"—and drained his glass at a draught. Nezhdánoff took a sip from his glass. Solómin remarked that he did not drink wine in the morning; Markéloff drained his glass to the dregs, with a vicious and determined air. It seemed as though he were being devoured by impatience: "here we are, still taking our ease," he seemed to say,—"and we are not getting at the real discussion at all." . . . . He thumped the table, said morosely:—"Gentlemen!"—and was preparing to speak. . . .

But at that moment there entered the room a smoothly-licked man, with a jug-like phiz, and a consumptive aspect, dressed in a short nankeen kaftan of the merchant fashion, with both arms dangling straight down. Having made his bow to all present this man reported something to Golúshkin in a low voice.

"Immediately, immediately,"—replied the latter hurriedly.—"Gentlemen," he added,—"I must ask you to excuse me. . . . Vásya here, my manager, has just informed me of a 'thingum-

bob' of such a nature" (Golúshkin expressed himself in this manner by way of a joke), "that I am imperatively obliged to absent myself for a time; but I hope, gentlemen, that you will consent to dine with me to-day at three o'clock; and then we shall be much more at liberty!"

Neither Solómin nor Nezhdánoff knew what reply to make; but Markéloff immediately said, with the same surliness of visage and voice as before:

"Of course we will; but what sort of a comedy is this?"

"I thank you sincerely,"—Golúshkin caught him up—and, bending toward Markéloff, he added:—"I 'll contribute a thousand rubles, at least, to the cause . . . have no doubt as to that!"

And thereupon he thrice made a gesture with his right hand, with the thumb and little finger outspread, signifying: "I 'll keep my word!"

He escorted his guests to the door,—and standing on the threshold he shouted:

"I shall expect you at three o'clock!"

"You may!"—replied Markéloff alone.

"Gentlemen!"—said Solómin as soon as all three found themselves in the street,—"I am going to hire a drozhky and drive to the factory. What shall we do until dinner-time?—idle about? And as for that merchant of ours . . . . it strikes me that we shall get neither wool nor milk out of him, any more than out of a goat."

"Well, there will be some wool,"—remarked Markéloff, gruffly. "Here he has promised money. Do you despise him? We cannot enter into details.—We are not fastidious girls of marriageable age."

"As if I despised him!" calmly responded Solómin. "I am only asking myself of what use my own presence can be? However," he added, glancing at Nezhdánoff with a smile:—"as you like; I will remain. Misery loves company."

Markéloff raised his head.

"Let us go, for the time being, to the public park; the weather is fine."

"Come on."

They set out.—Markéloff and Solómin in front, Nezhdánoff behind them.

## XVIII

His soul was in a strange state. There had been so many new sensations, so many new faces during the last two days. . . . For the first time in his life he had become intimately acquainted with a young girl, with whom—in all probability—he had fallen in love. He had been present—in all probability—at the inception of the cause, to which he had consecrated all his powers. . . And what then? . . . Was he happy?—No.—Was he wavering? growing cowardly? disconcerted?—Oh, of course not. Then, was he experiencing, at least, that tension of the whole being, that impetuous longing to advance into the front ranks of the warriors which the imminent approach of a battle calls forth?—No, again. "Did he, then, after all, believe in that cause?—Oh, accursed æsthetic! Sceptic!" whispered his lips dumbly.—Why this languor, this disinclination even to speak as soon as he was not yelling and raging?—What inward voice was he endeavouring to stifle by that yell? But Marianna, that glorious, trusting comrade, that pure, passionate soul, that magnificent young girl—did not she love him? Was it not a great piece of luck that he should

have met her, that he should have won her friendship, her love? And those two beings, who were now walking in front of him, that Markéloff, that Solómin, whom he still knew so little, but toward whom he felt so greatly attracted,—were not they capital specimens of Russian existence, of Russian life,—and was not acquaintance, intimacy with them a piece of good luck also?—Then why that ill-defined, perturbed, aching sensation? Why that sadness?—"If thou art a reflective and melancholy man,"—whispered his lips again,—"why the devil art thou a revolutionist? Write verses, languish, and wrestle with thine own petty thoughts and sensations—and burrow into various psychological considerations and subtleties,—but, the chief thing of all is,—do not take thy sickly, nervous irritation and whims for the manly indignation, for the honourable wrath of the man of convictions!—Oh, Hamlet, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, how am I to emerge from thy shadow? How am I to leave off imitating thee in everything, even in the disgraceful enjoyment of my own self-castigation?"

"Alexis! Friend! the Russian Hamlet!"—suddenly rang out a familiar, piping voice, as though in echo to all these reflections.—"Is it thee I behold?"

Nezhdánoff raised his eyes—and with amazement, saw before him Pákhlin!—Pákhlin in the image of a shepherd, clothed in a flesh-coloured

garment, with no neckcloth round his neck, in a large straw hat, encircled by a blue ribbon, and thrust clear back on the nape of his neck—and in lacquered shoes!

He immediately limped up to Nezhdánoff and grasped his hand.

"In the first place,"—he began,—"although we are in the public park, we must embrace . . . and kiss each other, according to our old habit. . . One! two! three!—In the second place, thou knowest that if I had not met thee to-day thou wouldst certainly have beheld my countenance to-morrow,—for thy place of residence is known to me, and I even came to this town with the express intention . . . in some manner or other,—but of that later; in the third place, introduce me to thy comrades. Tell me, briefly, who they are, and tell them who I am, and we will enjoy life!"

Nezhdánoff complied with his friend's desire, named him to Markéloff and Solómin—and told about each one of them—who he was, where he lived, what he did, and so forth.

"Very good indeed!"—exclaimed Pákhlin;—"and now, permit me to lead you all far from the crowd which does not, however, exist—to the isolated bench, seated whereon I, in hours of meditation, enjoy nature.—There is a wonderfully fine view from it: the Governor's house, two striped sentry-boxes, three gendarmes, and not a single dog!—But you must not be too greatly

surprised at my speeches, wherewith I so sedulously endeavour to make you laugh!—In the opinion of my friends, I am the representative of Russian wit . . . hence, probably, my limp."

Pákhlin led the friends to the "isolated bench," and seated them on it, first having driven away from it two beggar-women. The young men "exchanged ideas," . . . a decidedly tiresome occupation in the majority of cases—especially in the early stages of acquaintance—and remarkably sterile of results.

"Halt!"—suddenly exclaimed Pákhlin, turning to Nezhdánoff,—"I must explain to thee why I am here. Thou knowest I take my sister away somewhere every year; when I learned that thou wert setting out for the neighbourhood of this town, I called to mind that in this very town dwell two of the most remarkable persons: a man and wife who are relatives of ours . . . on the mother's side. My father was a burgher" —(Nezhdánoff knew that, but Pákhlin said it for the benefit *of those two*)—"and she was of noble birth. And they have been inviting us to make them a visit for this long time past!—Stay! I say to myself. . . That just suits me. They are the kindest sort of people, my sister will be advantageously situated with them; what more could be desired?—so we just came hither. And it was exactly the right thing! So we are well off here. . . I cannot tell you how well off!—But

what people they are! What people!—You certainly must make their acquaintance! What are you doing here? Where are you going to dine? And why, precisely, did you come here?"

"We are to dine to-day at the house of a certain Golúshkin. . There is a merchant here of that name," replied Nezhdánoff.

"At what o'clock?"

"At three."

"And you are to see him about . . . about . . . ." Pákhlin cast a scrutinising glance at Solómin, who smiled, and at Markéloff, whose brow grew more and more lowering.

"Come, Alyósha; tell them, . . . make some free-mason sign, I mean it . . . tell them that they need not stand on ceremony with me. . . . For I am one of you . . . of your society. . . ."

"Golúshkin is one of us also,"—remarked Nezhdánoff.

"Well, that 's splendid!—There 's lots of time yet before three o'clock.—See here—let 's go to my relations'."

"Why, you are out of your mind! How can one be so . . . ."

"Don't you worry about that! I assume the responsibility myself.—Imagine: it 's an oasis! Neither politics, nor literature, nor anything contemporary ever gets a peep in there. . The little house is a pot-bellied sort of affair, such as is nowhere to be seen nowadays anywhere; the

smell in it is—antique; the people are antiques; the air is antique . . . whatever you touch is antique. Katherine the Second, powder, farthingales, the eighteenth century!—The master and mistress of the house, . . . . just fancy: both man and wife are old, very old, of the same age,—and devoid of wrinkles; round, plump, clean, regular little love-bird parakeets; but good to stupidity, to holiness, without limit! I am told that 'unlimited' goodness is often accompanied by the absence of moral sentiment. . . But I do not enter into such subtleties, and I only know that my little old folks are good, kind souls! And they never had any children. They are called the 'blessed,'[1] in town. They both dress exactly alike, in a sort of long, hooded garment of striped stuff—and the stuff is of such solid quality, you cannot find any such anywhere nowadays.—They are frightfully like each other—only one of them wears a cap on her head and the other has a night-cap on his—with exactly the same sort of ruches as are on the cap, but without any ribbon. If it were not for the ribbon, you would not know them apart; and the husband is beardless, to boot. And their names are: one,—Fómushka, and the other Fímushka.—I tell you, one ought to pay money to have a look at them. They love each other to an impossible degree: and if any one calls on them, it is—'Pray come in!'—

[1] In the sense of half-witted.—TRANSLATOR.

And obliging people: they will show off all their little tricks at once. There is only one point: smoking is not allowed in their house: not because they are sectarians,[1]—but because tobacco disgusts them. . . . And in their day, who smoked? —On the other hand, they keep no canary-birds—because that bird was also not widely disseminated at that epoch. . . . And that is a great piece of good-luck—you will agree!—Well, how is it to be? Will you go?"

"Really, I do not know,"—began Nezhdánoff.

"Stay: I have not yet told you all.—Their voices are exactly alike: if you shut your eyes you do not know which one of them is talking. Only Fómushka's speech is somewhat the more tender of the two.—Here you are gentlemen, making preparations for the great cause,—perhaps for a terrible struggle. . . Why, before you hurl yourself into those raging waters . . . don't you take a dip into . . . ."

"Into stagnant water?"—interrupted Markéloff.

"Well, what of that?—It is stagnant, that 's a fact; only it is not putrid.—There are pools on the steppes of that sort; although they have no outlet they never become covered with scum because they have springs at the bottom.—And my

[1] The *raskólniki*—sectarians, who cling to the unrevised versions of the scriptures and church service-books (also called "Old Ritualists")—object to tobacco, tea, and coffee on religious grounds, which they justify by quaint arguments.—TRANSLATOR.

old folks have springs—there, at the bottom of their hearts, pure, exceedingly pure springs.—And there 's another thing: would you like to know how people lived a hundred, a hundred and fifty years ago?—then make haste and follow me. For the day, the hour, will come—it will, inevitably, be one and the same hour for both of them—and my love-birds will tumble off their perch—and everything antique will come to an end with them—and the pot-bellied little house will disappear—and in its place there will spring up what, according to the assertion of my grandmother, always does spring up on the spot where there have been 'humans,' namely, nettles, burdock, sowthistles, wormwood, and horse-dock; the street itself will cease to exist, and men will come, and nothing of that sort will ever be found again, unto ages of ages!" . . . .

"Well, why not?"—cried Nezhdánoff:—"really, we might as well go!"

"I am ready, with the greatest pleasure,"—said Solómin;—"that 's not in my line—but it is curious, all the same;—and if Mr. Pákhlin really can guarantee that we shall not discommode any one by our visit, then . . . why not. . . ."

"Come, you need have no doubts!"—exclaimed Pákhlin in his turn:—"they will go into raptures over you—and that 's all. What 's the use of standing on ceremony. I tell you, they are

blessed eccentrics, we will make them sing.—And you, Mr. Markéloff—do you accept?"

Markéloff wrathfully shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot remain here alone!—Please show us the way."—The young men rose from the bench.

"What an awe-inspiring gentleman thou hast with thee,"—whispered Pákhlin to Nezhdánoff, pointing at Markéloff:—"Precisely like John the Forerunner, when he had eaten the locusts . . . the locusts alone, without any honey!—But that one,"—he added, nodding his head in the direction of Solómin,—"is a splendid fellow! What a glorious smile he has!—I have noticed that only those people who are above the rest smile in that way—and are not aware of it themselves."

"Are there any such people?" asked Nezhdánoff.

"They are rare; but they do exist,"—replied Pákhlin.

# XIX

Fómushka and Fímushka—Fomá Lavréntievitch and Evfémia Pávlovna Subótcheff—both belonged to one and the same ancient Russian noble stock—and were regarded as almost the oldest residents of the town of S....—They had married very early in life—and a great many years ago had settled down in an ancestral wooden house on the outskirts of the town—had never left it—and never, in any respect whatever, had changed their mode of life or their habits. Time, apparently, had stood still, so far as they were concerned; no "novelty" ever made its way across the threshold of their "oasis." Their property was not large; but their peasants, as of yore, still continued to bring them domestic fowls and provisions several times a year; the village elder, at appointed dates, presented himself with the quit-rent money, and a pair of hazel-hens, which were supposed to have been shot at the forest villa of his master and mistress, which, in reality, had long ago disappeared; he was treated to tea on the threshold of the drawing-room, he was presented with a sheepskin cap, a pair of green chamois mittens, and dismissed in God's keeping. The Subótcheff's house was full

of house-serfs. The aged servant, Kalliópitch, clad in an under-jacket of unusually thick cloth, with a standing collar, and tiny steel buttons, announced, as of yore, in a drawl, "the food is on the table," and fell into a doze as he stood behind his mistress' chair. The pantry was in his charge:—he reigned over "divers dried fruits, cardamon-seeds, and lemons,"—and to the question: had he heard that liberty had been proclaimed for all the serfs?—he always replied that some people chattered lots of nonsense; there is liberty among the Turks,—but, thank God, it had skipped him. The maid Púfka, a dwarf, was kept for amusement, but the old nurse, Vasílievna, entered during dinner, with a huge, dark-coloured kerchief on her head—and narrated all sorts of news in a mumbling voice:—about Napoleon, the year '12, about Antichrist and white negroes;—or, with her chin propped on her hand, as though in affliction, she communicated to them what sort of a dream she had had, and what it signified, and what fortune the cards had shown her. The Subótcheff's house itself was distinguished from all the other houses in the town: it was built wholly of oak, and had windows in the form of equal-sided squares; the double sashes were never removed. And it contained all sorts of outer vestibules, old-fashioned rooms with old-fashioned names:—and hot chambers, and light chambers at the top of the house, and one-roomed, semi-

cottages in the back yard, and porches with balustrades, and pigeon-houses on carved pillars, and all sorts of rear entrances and tiny rooms. In front there was a small garden, and at the back a garden; and in the garden,—what coops, detached sheds, barns, cold-storehouses, ice-houses . . . a regular nest! Not that there was a great deal of property preserved in all these buildings —some of them had already fallen into decay;— but all that had been constructed in ancient times, —well, and so it had remained. The Subótcheffs had only two horses, aged, saddle-backed, shaggy animals; on one of them even, white spots had come out, owing to age; its name was Nedvíga, the Motionless. They were harnessed—at most once a month—to a remarkable equipage with which the whole town was familiar, presenting the semblance of the earthly globe with a quarter part cut out in front, and upholstered in the inside with a foreign material, yellow in hue, thickly strewn with large blisters in the shape of warts. The last yard of that material had been woven in Utrecht or Lyons in the days of the Empress Elizabeth! And the Subótcheffs' coachman, also, was a very aged old man permeated with the odour of train-oil and tar; his beard started close up to his eyes, and his eyebrows fell in small cascades on his beard. He was so deliberate in his movements that he took five whole minutes over a pinch of snuff, two minutes to tuck his

whip into his girdle, and more than two hours to harness Nedvíga alone. His name was Perfíshka. If the Subótcheffs happened to go out for a drive and the equipage was obliged to make the slightest ascent—they invariably got frightened—(but they were frightened, also, when they went down hill)—they clung to the carriage-straps, and both kept repeating aloud: "Horses! horses . . . have the strength of Samuel:—but we—but we are lighter than down, lighter than a spirit!!" . . . . Every one in the town of S. . . . regarded the Subótcheffs as eccentrics, almost in the light of crazy people:—and they themselves admitted that they were not adapted to the order of things at the present day . . . . but they did not grieve much over that:—in that manner of existence into which they had been born, in which they had grown up, and entered the married state—in that manner of life they remained. One peculiarity alone of that life had not adhered to them: they never since they were born had punished any one, or had called any one to account for anything. If one of their servants turned out to be a notorious drunkard or thief, they first exercised patience and bore with him for a long time, as other people endure bad weather; and at last they endeavoured to get rid of him, to let him go to another master and mistress: as much as to say,—let them worry over it for a while also! But this misfortune rarely occurred to them,—so rarely that it

constituted an epoch in their lives,—and they were wont to say, for example: "That happened long ago; it came to pass when that impudent Aldáshka lived with us"; or "when grandfather's fur cap with the fox-tail was stolen from us. . . . ." The Subótcheffs still used that sort of cap.—But another distinguishing characteristic of ancient customs was not to be observed in them: neither Fómushka nor Fímushka were over-religious people. Fómushka even held to Voltairian rules; and Fímushka was deathly afraid of ecclesiastical persons: they had the gift of the evil eye, according to her. "The priest will sit a while with me,"—she was wont to say,—"and, lo and behold! the cream has turned sour!"—They rarely went out to church—and they fasted in the Roman Catholic style, that is to say, they used eggs, butter, and milk. This was known in the town—and, of course, it did not redeem their reputation. But their goodness conquered everything; and although people made fun of the queer Subótcheffs, although they regarded them as idiots and blessed fools, nevertheless, in reality, they respected them.

Yes; they respected them . . . . but as for going to see them, no one did that. But neither did they feel aggrieved thereby. They were never bored when they were together—and therefore they never parted, and desired no other society. Neither Fómushka nor Fímushka had ever been

ill a single time; but if one or the other of them felt slightly indisposed—then *both* of them drank an infusion of linden flowers, rubbed their loins with warm oil—or dropped hot tallow on the soles of their feet—and in a short time everything passed off.—They always spent their days in the same way. They rose late, took chocolate in the morning out of small cups, in the shape of mortars; "tea,"—they asserted,—"came into fashion after our day";—they sat facing each other, and either chatted—(and they always found something to talk about!)—or read from "An Agreeable Way to Pass the Time," "The Mirror of Light," or "The Aonid"; or they looked through an old album, bound in red morocco with a gilded edge, which had once been the property, so the inscription ran, of one Mme. Barbe de Kabýline. —When and how that album had fallen into their hands—they themselves did not know. It contained several French and many Russian poems and articles in prose, in the nature, for example, of the following "brief" reflections concerning "Cecero."

In what frame of mind Cecero entered upon the rank of quæstor, the following will set forth. Having called on the gods to bear witness to the purity of his sentiments in all the offices wherewith he had hitherto been honoured, he considered himself bound by the most sacred bonds to a worthy fulfilment of them, and in that intention he, Cecero, not only had not addicted

himself to any pleasures,—but had even shunned such enjoyments as appear to be utterly indispensable.

—Below this stood:

Written in Siberia, in hunger and cold.

There was also a good poem, entitled "Thyrsos," wherein such strophes as the following occurred:

Repose the universe directs,
The dew with pleasure glistens,
Caresses nature and refreshes,
Imparts to her new life!

Thyrsos alone, with sorrowing soul
Suffers, torments himself, and grieves. . . .
When with him dear Aneta is not—
Nothing can him cheer!

—and an impromptu by a passing captain, in the year 1790, "The Sixth Day of May":

Ne'er shall I forget!
Thee, village beloved!
And I shall ever bear in mind!
How pleasantly the time did pass!
The honour that I had!

With thine owner fair!
The five best days of life!
To spend in the most respected circle!
Amid a multitude of ladies and young girls,
And other *an*teresting persons!

On the last page of the album stood—instead of verses—recipes for maladies of the stomach, for spasms—and, alas!—even for tape-worms. The Subótcheff's dined punctually at twelve o'clock, and always ate old-fashioned viands: curd-fritters, sour soup with salted gherkins, freely-salted cabbage, patties filled with salted cucumbers, hasty-pudding, rolls made with eggs, pudding of potato flour flavoured with fruit juice, compotes of dried fruits and berries, sweetened with raisins or honey, fowl roasted on a spit with saffron, custard with honey. After dinner they reposed,—a brief hour, no more,—waked up, again sat down facing each other, and drank bilberry ale, and sometimes even an effervescent sort, called "forty minds," which, however, almost every time spurted out of the bottle and caused great laughter to the old couple, but much vexation to Kallió-pitch; he had to wipe up "everywhere"—and he grumbled for a long time, at the housekeeper and the cook, who had invented that beverage, according to his assertions. . . . "And what satisfaction is there in it? It only spoils the *purniture!*" —Then the Subótcheffs read something again, or joked with the dwarf Púfka, or sang together antiquated romances (their voices were exactly alike, high-pitched, weak, rather quavering, and hoarse—especially after a nap—but not devoid of agreeability)—or, in conclusion, they played cards, but always old-fashioned games: *krebs, la*

*mouche,* or even *boston samprander!* Then the samovár made its appearance; in the evening they drank tea. . . . They made *this* concession to the spirit of the age; but every time they regarded it as self-indulgence, and thought that the nation was growing distinctly less robust "from that Chinese weed."—In general, however, they refrained from censuring the new epoch, and from lauding the old one: they had never lived otherwise in their lives, but that other people might live in a different—and even a better manner—they were willing to concede, if only they were not compelled to make any changes!—At eight o'clock Kalliópitch served supper, consisting of the inevitable cold hash with kvas, and at nine o'clock the striped, high-swelling feather-beds received into their mellow embrace the plump bodies of Fómushka and Fímushka, and untroubled sleep descended without delay upon their eyelids.—And everything grew silent in the ancient house: the shrine-lamp twinkled in front of the holy pictures, and an odour of musk and balm was spread abroad, a cricket whirred—and the good, ridiculous, innocent couple slept on.

It was to these simpletons, or, as he expressed it, to these love-birds, who were entertaining his sister, that Pákhlin conducted his acquaintances. His sister was a clever girl, not devoid of comeliness. She had wonderful eyes; but her unfortunate hump crushed her, deprived her of all confi-

dence in herself and cheerfulness, rendered her distrustful, and almost malicious. And it was her luck to have a very curious name: Snandúliya! —Pákhlin had wanted to change it to Sóphya; but she clung obstinately to her strange name, saying that a hunchback ought to be called precisely that—Snandúliya. She was a good musician, and played very respectably on the piano— "thanks to my long fingers,"—she was accustomed to remark, not without bitterness: "hunchbacked people always have that sort of fingers."

The visitors found Fómushka and Fímushka at the very moment when they had waked up from their post-prandial nap, and were sipping their fruit ale.

"We are entering the eighteenth century!"— exclaimed Pákhlin, as soon as they crossed the threshold of the Subótcheffs' house.

And, in truth, the eighteenth century greeted the visitors in the very anteroom, in the shape of low, bluish screens with black silhouettes of powdered dames and cavaliers, which had been cut out and pasted on them. At one fortunate period, in the '80s of the eighteenth century, the popular silhouettes of Lavater were in high fashion in Russia. The sudden appearance of such a large number of visitors—four altogether!—produced a sensation in the rarely-visited house. The trampling of booted and bare feet became audible, several feminine faces were thrust out for a

moment, and then vanished—some one was thrust in somewhere, some one groaned, some one snorted, some one whispered convulsively: "The devil take you!"

At last Kalliópitch made his appearance in his rough under-jacket—and throwing open the door into the "hall," announced in a loud voice:

"Sir, here comes Síla Samsónitch with some other gentlemen!"

The host and hostess were far less perturbed than their domestics. The irruption of four adult men into their fairly spacious drawing-room did, in sooth, somewhat amaze them;—but Pákhlin immediately reassured them, by introducing to them, in turn, with divers quaint comments,—Nezhdánoff, Solómin, and Markéloff—as peaceable, and not "crown" persons.

Fómushka and Fímushka were not especially fond of crown—that is to say, of official persons.

Snandúliya, who presented herself in response to her brother's summons, was much more agitated, and stood on a good deal more ceremony than the old Subótcheffs. Both simultaneously—and with precisely the same expressions—invited the visitors to be seated, and inquired what refreshments should be served to them: tea, chocolate, or sparkling fruit ale with preserves? When they had ascertained that their guests wished for nothing, as they had recently breakfasted with merchant Golúshkin, they ceased to press re-

freshments upon them, and clasping their hands on their laps in precisely similar manner, they entered into conversation.

At first this dragged on rather languidly, but soon became animated.—Pákhlin made the old folks laugh excessively by Gógol's familiar anecdotes about the chief of police who forced his way into the church, which was crammed full, and about the police-chief looking like a patty; they laughed until they cried. They laughed also in identical fashion: very shrilly, winding up with a cough, and with faces flushed and perspiring all over. Pákhlin had noticed, in general, that quotations from Gógol act very powerfully and rather violently on persons like the Subótcheffs; but, as he was not anxious to amuse them, as he was to exhibit them to his friends, he changed his battery, and the old couple were soon completely reassured. Fómushka brought out and exhibited to the visitors his favourite snuff-box of carved wood, on which, formerly, thirty-six human figures could have been counted, in various attitudes: they had all, long since, been erased—but Fómushka saw them, saw them down to that very moment, and was able to enumerate them, and pointed them out.—"Look"—he said, "here is one looking out of a little window—see, he has thrust out his head. . . . ." But the spot at which his pudgy finger, with its raised nail pointed, was as smooth as the rest of the lid of

the snuff-box. Then he called the attention of his visitors to the picture which hung over his head, painted in oils: it depicted a huntsman in profile, galloping at full speed on a light-bay horse—also in profile—across a snow-covered plain. The huntsman wore a tall sheepskin cap with a sky-blue top, a kazák kaftan of camel's hair, with a velvet border, girt with a forged, gilt belt; a silk embroidered mitten was thrust into the belt; his dagger, in a silver scabbard with black niello work hung from it. In one hand, in a very dashing and masterful manner, the huntsman held a huge horn, adorned with red tassels, and in the other, his reins and kazák whip; all four feet of the horse were hanging in the air;—and on each one of them the painter had carefully depicted a shoe, even designating the nails. "And observe," said Fómushka, pointing with the same pudgy finger at the four semicircular spots brought out on the white background behind the horse's hoofs—"his tracks in the snow—and he has even represented them!"—Why there were only four of those tracks—and why not a single one was visible any further behind him—Fómushka did not explain.

"And, you know,—that was I!" he added, after a brief pause, with a shamefaced smile.

"What?"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff.—"Were you the huntsman?"

"Yes . . . . but not for long. Once, when riding at full speed, I flew over the horse's head,

and wounded my *kurpei*. Well, and Fímushka got frightened . . and forbade me. I abandoned it from that time on."

"What was it that you wounded?"—inquired Nezhdánoff.

"My *kurpei*,"—repeated Fómushka, dropping his voice.

The guests exchanged mute glances. No one knew what a *kurpei* was,—that is to say, Markéloff knew that the shaggy tuft on the cap of a Kazák or a Tcherkessian was called a *kurpei;* but assuredly, Fómushka could not have wounded *that!* But not one of them could make up his mind to ask him, what, precisely, he meant by the word *kurpei*.

"Well, since thou hast made thy boast," began Fímushka, suddenly,—"I 'm going to make my boast, too!"

From a tiny "*bonheur du jour*"—that was the appellation of an ancient bureau, on tiny, crooked legs, with a movable circular lid which ran into the back of the bureau,—she drew forth a miniature in water-colours, in an oval, bronze frame, representing a perfectly naked child of four years, with a quiver on its back, and a sky-blue ribbon across its breast, testing its sharp arrows with the tip of its finger. The child had very curly hair, was slightly cross-eyed, and was smiling. Fímushka showed the water-colour to her visitors.

"That was I . . . ." she said.

"You?"

"Yes, I. In my youth. A French artist, a capital painter, was in the habit of visiting at the house of my deceased father. So he painted me as a gift on my father's Name-day. And what a nice Frenchman he was! He used to call on us after that, also.—He used to come in and give a scrape with his foot, and then wriggle it, and wriggle it, and kiss your hand, and when he went away, he would kiss his own fingers,—indeed he would!—And he bowed right and left and behind and in front! He was a very nice Frenchman!"

The visitors praised his work; Pákhlin even thought that there still existed some degree of resemblance.

But at this point Fómushka began to talk about the French of the present day, and enunciated the opinion that they must have all become very malicious!—"Why so, Fomá Lavréntievitch?"—"Why, good gracious! . . . What names they have taken to using!"—"For example?"—"Why, here, for example: Nojean-Saint-Lorrain!—a regular bandit!"—In this connection, Fómushka inquired who was now reigning in Paris?—They told him that it was Napoleon.—This apparently amazed him and grieved him.—"You don't say so? . . . Such an old man . . . ." he began, and relapsed into silence, glancing about him in confusion. Fómushka knew very

little French, and read Voltaire in translation (under the head of his bed, in a private coffer, he kept a manuscript copy of "Candide")—but he occasionally burst out into expressions such as: "that, my good sir, is a *fausse parquet!*"—(in the sense of "that is suspicious," "not true")—at which many people laughed, until one learned Frenchman explained that that was the ancient parliamentary expression used in his native land prior to the year 1780.

As the conversation had turned on France and the French, Fímushka brought herself to inquire about a certain matter which had been lingering in her mind.—At first she thought of applying to Markéloff, but he looked too sullen; she might have asked Solómin—but no!—she said to herself,—he is a common person; he is not likely to know French. So she addressed herself to Nezhdánoff.

"Well, my dear little father, I want to find out something from you,"—she began;—"you must excuse me! For my young relative here, Síla Samsónitch, to wit, makes fun of me, an old woman, and at my feminine ignorance."

"What is it?"

"It is this. If any one wanted to put such a question as this, in the French dialect: 'What is that?'—ought he to say: 'Kese-kese-kese-lya?'"

"Exactly that."

"But could he also say: 'kese-kese-lya?'"

"Yes."

"And simply: 'kese-lya?'"

"He might do that, also."

"And all would amount to the same thing?"

"Yes."

Fímushka reflected, and threw apart her hands.

"Now, Sílushka,"—she said at last,—"I am in the wrong, and thou art in the right. Only, those French people! . . . . Poor things!"

Pákhlin began to entreat the old people to sing some little romance. . . . They both laughed, and were surprised that the idea should have occurred to him; but they speedily assented, but only on condition that Snandúliya should sit down at the harpsichord and accompany them—she knew in what. In one corner there turned out to be a tiny piano which none of the visitors had noticed at first. Snandúliya seated herself at this "harpsichord," struck a few chords. . . . Such toothless, shrill, wizened, decrepit sounds Nezhdánoff had never heard since he was born; but the old couple immediately struck up:

"And was it then—that sadness—"

began Fómushka—

"In love should descend on us,
That the gods have given us hearts

Which are capable of love?[1]
Doth the feeling of passion only—"

responded Fímushka—

"Without calamity, without malign misfortune
Exist anywhere on earth?"

"Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere!"—

interpolated Fómushka;

"Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere!"—

repeated Fímushka;

"With it there is cruel sorrow
Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere!"—

they sang in unison:

"Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere!"—

Fómushka ended, in long-drawn tones.

"Bravo!" shouted Pákhlin:—"that 's the first couplet; and how about the second?"

"Very well,"—replied Fómushka:—"only, Snandúliya Samsónovna, where is the trill? There ought to be a trill after my verse."

"Very well,"—replied Snandúliya;—"you shall have your trill."

Fómushka began again:

"Has any one loved in the universe
Yet torment has not felt?

[1] The alternate lines rhyme in the original.—TRANSLATOR.

What lover, oh, what lover
Hath not wept and sighed?"

And then Fímushka:

"So the heart is as strange on the heights,
As the boat that sinks in the sea. . .
Why was it given to us?"

"For harm, for harm, for harm!"

exclaimed Fómushka—and waited, tc. give Snandúliya time to make the trill.

Snandúliya made it.

"For harm, for harm, for harm!"

repeated Fómushka.

And then both together:

"Take back the heart, ye gods,
Take back, take back, take back!
Take back, take back, take back!"

And everything again wound up with a trill.

"Bravo! bravo!"—they all cried, with the exception of Markéloff, and then even clapped their hands.

"Now I wonder,"—thought Nezhdánoff, as soon as the applause had ceased,—"whether they are conscious that they are acting the part . . . of clowns, as it were?—Perhaps not:—and perhaps they are conscious of it, but think: 'Where 's the harm since we are doing no one any mischief? We are even amusing others.' And, when you

come to think it over thoroughly, they are in the right, a hundred times in the right!"

Under the influence of these thoughts, he suddenly began to pay them compliments, in response to which they merely made slight courtesies, without quitting their arm-chairs. . . But, at that moment, from the adjoining room, probably a bed-chamber or the maids' room, whence whispering and rustling had long been audible, the dwarf Púfka suddenly made her appearance, accompanied by nurse Vasílievna.—Púfka began to squeak and writhe—and the nurse dissuaded her, and urged her on worse than before, by turns.

Markéloff, who had, for a long time, been exhibiting signs of impatience—(Solómin merely smiled more broadly than usual)—Markéloff turned to Fómushka, all at once:

"I had not expected it of you,"—he began, with his harsh manner,—"that you, with your enlightened mind,—for you are, I hear a disciple of Voltaire,—can amuse yourself with that which ought to constitute an object of commiseration—namely, with a deformed person. . . . ." Here he remembered Pákhlin's sister, and bit his tongue;—and Fómushka turned scarlet: "Yes . . . . but you see . . . it is n't I . . . she likes it herself. . ." But Púfka fairly pounced upon Markéloff.

"And what made thee take it into thy head,"

—she burst out in her whirring voice,—"to insult my master and mistress? They have taken care of me, a wretched pauper, they have received me into their house, they give me food and drink —and thou enviest me! So it makes thee cross-eyed, does it, to look at other folks' bread?—And where didst thou get the idea, thou black-visaged, horrid, repulsive creature, with moustache like a black beetle's. . . ." Here Púfka demonstrated with her thick, short fingers what sort of moustache he had.—Vasílievna grinned to the full extent of her toothless mouth—and an echo was audible from the adjoining room.

"I do not presume to judge you, of course," —said Markéloff to Fómushka.—"To care for the poverty-stricken and the crippled is a good work. But permit me to remark to you: to live in abundance, to live in clover—not to oppress others, but yet not to lay finger to finger for the welfare of one's neighbour . . . does not constitute being good; I, at least, to tell the truth, attach no value whatever to that sort of goodness!"

Here Púfka uttered a deafening shriek; she had not understood a word of what Markéloff had been saying; but the "black-face" was scolding . . . how dared he?—Vasílievna also muttered something—and Fómushka clasped his hands on his breast—and turning his face to his wife—"Fímushka, my darling,"—he said, al-

most sobbing—"dost thou hear what our gentleman guest is saying? Thou and I are sinners, evil-doers, pharisees . . . . we are living in clover, oï! oï! oï! . . . Thou and I must be turned into the street, out of our house—and have a broom apiece put into our hands, in order that we may earn our own living—oh, ho-ho!" On hearing these melancholy words, Púfka took to shrieking worse than before, Fímushka narrowed her eyes, curled her lips—and, after inhaling plenty of air, in order that she might produce a good effect—she began to scream and cry at the top of her voice. . . .

God knows how all this would have ended, had not Pákhlin interfered.

"What 's the meaning of this! upon my word," —he began, flourishing his hands and laughing loudly,—"are n't you ashamed of yourselves?—Mr. Markéloff was trying to joke;—but he has a very serious mien—and he was a trifle severe . . and you took it in earnest!—Enough of this! Evfémia Pávlovna, my dear creature, we are obliged to go away directly—so do you know what I am going to propose? by way of farewell . . . tell the fortunes of all of us . . . you are a master-hand at that.—Sister! Fetch the cards!"

Fímushka glanced at her husband; the latter was already sitting there quite serenely;—and she calmed down.

"The cards, the cards,"—she repeated:—"but I have unlearned it, father; I have forgotten—it 's a long time since I took them in my hands. . . . ."

But she did take into her hands, from the hands of Snandúliya, a pack of ancient, extraordinary, ombre cards.

"Whose fortune shall I tell?"

"Why, all our fortunes,"—said Pákhlin, promptly—but thought to himself:—"Well, what a volatile old lady it is! turn her any way you like. . . She 's charming!—All our fortunes, grandma, all,"—he added, "the future, tell us everything!"

Fímushka was on the point of laying out the cards, when she suddenly flung the whole pack from her.

"I do not need to tell your fortunes by the cards!"—she cried; "I know the characters of each one of you without that.—And according as the character is, so is the fate.—Now, that one" (she pointed at Solómin)—"is a cool, steadfast man;—and that one,"—(she shook her finger at Markéloff)—"is a hot-headed, destructive man." . . . (Púfka stuck her tongue out at him);—"there 's no need of saying anything to thee,"—(she glanced at Pákhlin); "thou knowest thyself: weathercock! And that one . . . ."

She pointed at Nezhdánoff—and faltered.

"Well?"—said he—"speak out, pray: what sort of a man am I?"

"What sort of a man art thou . . . " drawled Fímushka:—"thou art a man who deserves to be pitied—that 's what thou art!"

Nezhdánoff started.

"Who deserves to be pitied! Why so?"

"Because! I pity thee—so I do!"

"But why?"

"Because I have an eye that sees things.—Dost thou think I am a fool? On the contrary, I 'm more clever than thou,—in spite of the fact that thou hast red hair.—I pity thee . . . and that 's my word to thee!"

All remained silent . . . . exchanged glances and continued to maintain silence.

"Well, good-bye, friends,"—cried Pákhlin, noisily.—"We have overstayed our time with you, and you must be tired of us.—It is time for these gentlemen to be going . . . and I 'm going off also.—Farewell; thanks for your courtesy!"

"Good-bye, good-bye; come again; do not disdain us,"—said Fómushka and Fímushka with one voice. . . And Fómushka suddenly struck up:

"Many, many, many years, many . . . . ."[1]

"Many, many,"—quite unexpectedly rumbled out Kalliópitch in his bass voice, as he opened the door for the young men. . . . .

[1] That is, "long life," chanted after toasts and the like.—TRANSLATOR.

And all four suddenly found themselves in the street in front of the pot-bellied house;—and inside the windows resounded Púfka's shrill voice.

"The fools . . . ." she shrieked, "the fools!"

Pákhlin laughed loudly; but no one responded to him. Markéloff even eyed each of them over in turn, as though expecting to hear some word of indignation. . .

Solómin alone was smiling, as was his wont.

## XX

"WELL, what do you think of it!"—Pákhlin was the first to speak.—"We have been in the eighteenth century,—now we must go ahead—straight into the twentieth!—Golúshkin is such a progressive man, that it is improper to reckon him in the nineteenth century."

"Why, dost thou know him?"—asked Nezhdánoff.

"His fame fills the earth:—but I said, 'we must go ahead!' because I intend to go with you."

"What is the meaning of this? Why, thou art not acquainted with him?"

"As if that mattered! And were you acquainted with my love-birds?"

"But thou didst introduce us!"

"And do you introduce me!—You cannot have any secrets from me—and Golúshkin is a broad man.—He 'll be delighted at a new face, see if he is n't.—And here, with us in S. . . . things are simple."

"Yes,"—muttered Markéloff,—"people are unceremonious here, with you."

Pákhlin shook his head.

"Perhaps you intend that for me. . . . Never

mind! I have deserved that reproof.—But, do you know, my new acquaintance, you 'd better lay aside for awhile the gloomy thoughts with which your bilious temperament inspires you! —and the chief thing . . . . ."

"Mr. My New Acquaintance,"—Markéloff interrupted him, vehemently,—" I will say to you, in my turn . . . by way of warning: I never have had the slightest inclination for jokes—and particularly to-day!—And what do you know about my temper*ament!*" (He emphasised the last syllable.)—" It strikes me that it is not so very long since we set eyes on each other for the first time."

" Come, stop, stop, don't get angry—and don't swear—I believe you without that,"—said Pákhlin—and, turning to Solómin:—" Oh, you,"—he exclaimed,—" you, whom even the perspicacious Fímushka called a cool man,—and in whom there certainly is something soothing—tell me, had I any intention of causing unpleasantness to any one—or of jesting at an inappropriate time?—I merely asked to be allowed to go with you to Golúshkin's—moreover, I am an inoffensive creature.—I am not to blame for Mr. Markéloff's yellow complexion."

Solómin first shrugged one shoulder, then the other; it was a trick he had when he could not immediately decide what answer to make.

" No doubt,"—he said, at last,—" you, Mr.

Pákhlin, cannot cause offence to any one—and you do not desire to do so: and why should not you go to Mr. Golúshkin's? I suppose that we shall pass the time as agreeably there as we did with your relatives;—and with the same profit."

Pákhlin shook his finger at him.

"Oh! but you are spiteful, I perceive!—But, of course, you are going to Golúshkin's also?"

"Of course I am. Otherwise, I should have wasted to-day."

"Well, then—'*en avant, marchons!*'—to the twentieth century! to the twentieth century!—Nezhdánoff, progressive man, lead the way!"

"Very well;—go ahead;—but don't repeat your witticisms. Some one might suspect that you were running short of them."

"I 've got enough in stock for the likes of you," merrily retorted Pákhlin, and set out, as he said—not hop, skip, and jump, but "hop, skip, and limp."

"A very entertaining gentleman!"—remarked Solómin, as he followed him, arm in arm with Nezhdánoff:—"if we all get exiled to Siberia, there will be some one to amuse us."

Markéloff walked on in silence behind them all. And in the meantime all measures were being taken in the house of merchant Golúshkin, to serve dinner "in fine style," or "with chic." Fish-soup was cooked, very greasy—and very bad; various "patishó and frykasyei" were

prepared—(Golúshkin, in his quality of a man who stood at the apex of European civilisation, although he was an Old Ritualist, maintained a French kitchen, and hired a man cook from the Club whence he had been expelled for uncleanliness)—and, most important of all, several bottles of champagne were provided and put on the ice.

The host greeted our young men with the clumsy grimaces peculiar to him, a hurried aspect, and giggles.—He was very much pleased to see Pákhlin, as the latter had predicted that he would be. He asked him: "Are you really one of us?"—and, without waiting for an answer, exclaimed:—"Well, of course! I should think so!" Then he narrated how he had just been to see "that queer fellow," the Governor, who was forever bothering him about some philanthropic institutions—the devil only knows what. . . And positively, it was impossible to decide what gratified Golúshkin most: that he was received by the Governor, or that he had contrived to revile him, in the presence of young, progressive men. Then he introduced to them the promised proselyte. And whom did this proselyte turn out to be? That same smoothly-licked, consumptive man, with a jug-like phiz, who had entered that morning with a report, and whom Golúshkin had called Vásya,—his manager.—"He 's not eloquent,"—Golúshkin assured them, pointing

at him with all five fingers,—"but he is devoted to our cause with all his soul."—And Vásya merely bowed, and blushed, and blinked, and displayed his teeth in a grin, with such an air, that once again it was impossible to understand what sort of a fellow he was: a common-place little fool—or, on the contrary—the most perfect rogue and rascal?

"Well, but to table, gentlemen, to table,"—babbled Golúshkin.—They seated themselves at the table, having first eaten heartily of the relishes. Immediately after the soup, Golúshkin ordered the champagne to be served. Like frozen scraps of the first thin ice of winter, it trickled out of the necks of the bottles into the glasses held up to receive it.—"To our . . . to our enterprise!" exclaimed Golúshkin, winking one eye the while, and nodding his head toward the servant, thereby letting it be understood that they must be cautious in the presence of outsiders. The proselyte Vásya continued to remain mute—and, although he sat on the edge of his chair, and, in general, behaved with an obsequiousness which was not at all in keeping with the convictions to which he, according to his master's statements, was devoted with all his soul—yet he guzzled the wine desperately! . . . On the other hand, all the others talked; that is to say, in reality, the host talked—and so did Pákhlin—especially Pákhlin. Nezhdánoff

was inwardly vexed; Markéloff was in a rage and fury—in a different way, but no less violently, than at the Subótcheff's; Solómin took observations.

Pákhlin enjoyed himself!—With his audacious language he pleased Golúshkin extraordinarily, for the latter had no suspicion that that same "limpy" kept whispering in the ear of Nezhdánoff, who sat next to him, the most spiteful remarks about him, Golúshkin!—He even assumed that the former was a simple sort of young fellow, and that he might be "handled" patronisingly . . . and that was one reason—among others—why he liked him. Had Pákhlin been sitting beside him, he would long since have poked him in the ribs with his finger or slapped him on the shoulder; he kept nodding at him across the table, and wagging his head in his direction . . . but between Nezhdánoff and him there sat, in the first place Markéloff—that "gloomy cloud"—and then Solómin.—To make up for this, Golúshkin, at every word Pákhlin uttered, laughed gaily on faith, in advance, tapping himself on the belly, displaying his bluish gums. Pákhlin speedily comprehended what was required of him, and began to revile everything—(which exactly suited him)—everything and everybody: both the conservatives and the liberals, the officials and the lawyers, the administrators and the landed proprietors, and the mem-

bers of the county council, and of the town council, and Moscow and Petersburg!

"Yes, yes, yes, yes,"—chimed in Golúshkin; —"just so, just so, just so, just so!—Here, for instance, is our Mayor—a perfect ass! He 's an impenetrable blockhead!—I tell him thus and so .... but he understands nothing; he 's as bad as our Governor himself!"

"And is your Governor stupid?"—inquired Pákhlin.

"Why, I tell you he 's an ass!"

"Have you noticed whether he speaks with a rattle or with a snuffle?"

"What?"—inquired Golúshkin, not without surprise.

"But is it possible that you do not know? With us, in Russia, important civilians rattle in their throats; important military men talk through their noses with a snuffle;—and only the very loftiest dignitaries both rattle and snuffle, simultaneously."

Golúshkin roared, he even wept with laughter.

"Yes, yes,"—he lisped:—"he talks with a snuffle ... through his nose with a snuffle.... He 's a military man!"

"Akh, you dolt!"—said Pákhlin to himself.

"With us everything is rotten, touch where you will!"—shouted Golúshkin, a little later.—"Everything, everything is rotten!"

"Most respected Kapíton Andréitch,"—re-

marked Pákhlin, impressively—and quietly said to Nezhdánoff: "Why does he keep jerking his arms out as though his coat cut him under the arms?"—"Most respected Kapíton Andréitch, believe me, half measures will do no good here!"

"What half measures?"—shouted Golúshkin, suddenly ceasing to laugh, and assuming a serious mien:—"there 's only one thing to be done; pluck them up by the roots!—Váska, drink, you cursed dog!"

"But I am drinking, Kapíton Andréitch,"—replied the clerk, emptying a glass down his throat.

Golúshkin also "filled himself to the brim."

"Why in the world does n't he burst!"—whispered Pákhlin to Nezhdánoff.

"Habit!"—replied the latter.

But the clerk was not the only one who drank the wine. Little by little it began to take effect on all of them.—Nezhdánoff, Markéloff, even Solómin gradually began to take part in the conversation.

At first, as though with scorn, as though with vexation at himself that he was not upholding his character and was allowing himself to beat the air vainly, Nezhdánoff began to enlarge upon the fact that it was time to stop amusing themselves with mere words, time to "act";—he even referred to "a secure foundation!" And at this point, not observing that he was contradicting

himself, he began to demand that they should point out to him those existing, real elements on which it was possible to rely, since he could not perceive them.—"In society there is no sympathy, in the populace there is no consciousness, . . . . struggle as you will!" Of course, no one made him any answer; not because there was no answer to make—but each one of them had already begun to utter his own ideas also.—Markéloff began to drum away, in a dull and spiteful voice, persistently, monotonously—("for all the world as though he were chopping up cabbage,"—remarked Pákhlin). Precisely what he was talking about was not quite intelligible; the word "artillery" became audible from his lips, at moments when a lull occurred . . . . in all probability he was alluding to the defects which he had discovered in its organisation. The Germans and adjutants caught it heavily also. Even Solómin remarked that there are two ways of waiting; to wait and do nothing, and to wait and advance the cause.

"We don't want any advocates of gradual change," remarked Markéloff, morosely.

"The advocates of gradual changes have, so far, come from above,"—remarked Solómin,—"but we are going to make an effort from below."

"We don't want them, to the devil with them! we don't want them,"—chimed in Golúshkin,

fiercely;—"it must be done at one onset, at one onset!"

"That is to say, you want to jump out of the window?"

"And jump I will!"—roared Golúshkin.—"I 'll jump!—and Váska will jump!—If I give the command, he 'll jump! Hey? Váska? —Thou wilt jump, wilt thou not?"

The clerk drained his glass of champagne.

"Whithersoever you go, Kapíton Andréitch, there I go also.—Dare I judge?"

"Ah! that 's right!—I 'll twist thee into a r-ram's h-horn!"

There speedily ensued what is known in the language of drunkards as the tower of Babel. There arose a "vast" noise and uproar.—As the first snow-flakes flutter, swiftly succeeding one another, and shimmer in the warm autumn air, —so, in the heated atmosphere of Golúshkin's dining-room did all sorts of words whirl about, conflicting with and crowding one another: progress, government, literature; the tax problem, classicism, realism, nihilism, communism; international, clerical, liberal, capital; administration, organisation, association, and even crystallisation! Apparently it was precisely this uproar which sent Golúshkin into ecstasies; therein, apparently, so far as he was concerned, lay the real essence of the thing. . . . He was triumphant! —"Know our people!" he seemed to say.

"Stand aside . . . or I 'll kill you! . . . Kapíton Andréitch is coming!"—The clerk, Vásya, got so tipsy at last that he began to snort and to talk at his plate, and suddenly he shouted out like a madman:—"What the devil are progymnasia? ! "

Golúshkin suddenly rose to his feet,—and throwing back his crimsoned face, whereon, with the expression of coarse despotism and triumph there was strangely intermingled the expression of a different sentiment, resembling secret alarm, and even trepidation,—he bawled: "I contribute another *t'ousand!*—Váska, fetch it here!" to which Váska replied, in an undertone:—"Splendid!" And Pákhlin, all pale and perspiring (for the last quarter of an hour he had been vieing with the clerk in his potations),—Pákhlin, jumping up from his seat, said with a faltering tongue:—"I contribute! He uttered: 'I contribute!'—Oh! insult to that sacred word—I sacrifice![1] No one dares to raise himself to thee, no one has the power to fulfil those obligations which thou imposest, at least no one of us here present,—and that self-fool, that vile sack has shaken his bloated belly, has strewn out a handful of rubles, and shouts: 'I sacrifice!' And he demands gratitude! he expects a crown of laurel—the villain!" Golúshkin either did not hear or

[1] To contribute and to sacrifice are indentical in Russian.—TRANSLATOR.

did not understand what Pákhlin had said, or, possibly, he accepted his words in the light of a jest, for he once more roared: "Yes! a *t'ousand* rubles! What Kapíton Golúshkin has said is sacred!" He suddenly thrust his hand into his side pocket.—"Here—here is the money!—There now, pick it up; and remember Kapíton!"—As soon as he got a little excited, he spoke of himself, as small children do, in the third person. Nezhdánoff gathered up the bank-bills which were scattered over the dripping table-cloth. But after that there was no reason for remaining; and it was getting late. All rose, took their hats,—and departed.

When they got into the open air the heads of all began to swim—especially Pákhlin's.

"Well?—where are we going now?"—he ejaculated not without difficulty.

"I don't know where you are going,"—replied Solómin,—"but I am going home."

"To the factory?"

"Yes."

"Now—by night—afoot?"

"What of that?—There are neither wolves nor brigands here, and I am a good walker.—It is cooler by night, too."

"But it is four versts thither!"

"I don't care if it were five.—Farewell for the present, gentlemen!"

Solómin buttoned up his coat, pulled his cap

down on his forehead, lighted a cigar, and went off down the street with great strides.

"And whither art thou going?"—Pákhlin appealed to Nezhdánoff.

"I 'm going home with him."—He pointed to Markéloff, who was standing motionless, with his arms folded on his breast.—"We have our horses here, and our carriage."

"Well, very good . . . and I, brother, am going to the oasis, to Fómushka and Fímushka. And here I will tell thee something, brother.—There is nonsense there and nonsense here. . . . Only, that nonsense,—the nonsense of the eighteenth century,—is nearer to Russian real life than this twentieth-century stuff.—Good-bye, gentlemen; I am drunk . . . don't be hard on me.—Hearken to what I am about to say to you! There is n't a woman in the world . . . kinder . . . and better . . . than my sister . . . Snandúliya; but then, she 's a hunchback, and she—she 's Snandúliya. And that 's the way it always is in this world!—However, it is fitting that she should have that name.—Do you know who Saint Snandúliya was? A benevolent woman who went about to the prisons, and healed the wounds of the prisoners and the sick.—But, good-bye! Good-bye, Nezhdánoff . . . thou man worthy of pity! And thou, officer . . . phew! thou phantom of an officer! good-bye!"

He wended his way, limping and staggering,

to the "oasis";—and Markéloff, in company with Nezhdánoff, sought out the posting-house, where they had left their tarantás, ordered the horses to be put to—and half an hour later they were rolling along the highway.

## XXI

LOW-HANGING clouds veiled the sky—and although it was not entirely dark and the wheel-marks were visible on the road, faintly shining ahead, yet to the right and the left everything was obscured, and the outlines of detached objects flowed together into large, confused spots. —It was a dim, windless night; the breeze blew up by fits and starts in damp gusts, bringing with it the odour of rain, and of broad grain-fields. When, after passing through the oak-scrub, which served as a landmark, the time came for them to turn off into the country road, matters became still worse; the narrow way completely vanished from time to time. . . . The coachman drove more slowly.

"I hope we shall not lose our way,"—remarked Nezhdánoff, who had maintained silence up to that moment.

"No; we shall not lose our way!"—said Markéloff.—"Two calamities do not happen in one day."

"But what was the first calamity, pray?"

"The first? Why, that we have wasted the day, —do you count that as nothing?"

"Yes . . . . of course. . . . That Golúshkin!—We ought not to have drunk so much wine. I have a deadly headache now."

"I am not speaking of Golúshkin; he gave some money, at any rate;—so some profit has ensued from our visit!"

"Is it possible, then, that you regret that Pákhlin should have taken us to his . . . what the deuce was it he called them . . . his love-birds?"

"There 's no occasion for regretting that . . . nor for rejoicing at it, either. You see, I 'm not the sort of person who takes an interest in such toys. . . . I was not alluding to that calamity."

"To what one, then?"

Markéloff made no reply, and only fidgeted about a little in his corner, as though he were wrapping himself up. Nezhdánoff could not make out his face very distinctly; only his moustache formed a black, horizontal line; but ever since the morning he had been conscious of the presence in Markéloff of something which it was better not to meddle with—some dull and secret irritation.

"See here, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch," he began, after a brief pause; "is it possible that you are seriously enraptured with the letters of that Mr. Kislyakóff, which you gave me to read to-day? Why—pardon the expression—they are balderdash!"

Markéloff straightened himself up.

"In the first place,"—said he, in a wrathful voice,—"I do not in the least share your opinion as to those letters, but find them very remarkable . . . and conscientious! And, in the second place, Kislyakóff is toiling, labouring—and, most important of all, he *believes;* he believes in our cause, he believes in the re-vo-lu-tion! I must tell you one thing, Alexyéi Dmítritch—I notice that *you*—you are growing cold toward our cause;—you do not believe in it!"

"From what do you draw that conclusion?"—articulated Nezhdánoff, slowly.

"From what? Why, from every one of your words, from your whole conduct!—To-day, at Golúshkin's, who was it that said that he did not see on what elements we could rely?—You!—Who demanded that they should be pointed out to him?—You, again! And when that friend of yours, that empty-pated merry-andrew and scoffer, Mr. Pákhlin, began, with his eyes rolled skyward, to assert that not one of us was capable of making a sacrifice, who was it that backed him up,—who was it that nodded his head approvingly?—Was n't it you?—Talk about yourself as much as you like, and as you like . . . . that is your affair . . . but I know people who have seen their way to renouncing everything which makes life fair—even the bliss of love—in order that they may serve their convictions—in order that they may not prove false to them!—Well,

*you* are not in the mood for that to-day, of course!"

"To-day? Why to-day in particular?"

"Come, don't dissimulate, for God's sake, you happy Don Juan, you lover crowned with myrtles!"—shouted Markéloff, entirely forgetting the coachman, who, although he did not turn round on his box, could hear everything with perfect distinctness. To tell the truth, the coachman was at that moment far more preoccupied with the road than with all the altercations of the gentlemen who were sitting behind him—and he cautiously and rather timidly loosened the reins of the shaft-horse, which tossed its head and held back as the tarantás descended some declivity which should not have been there at all.

"Pardon me—I do not understand you in the least"—said Nezhdánoff.

Markéloff burst into a constrained and malicious laugh.

"You do not understand me! Ha, ha, ha!—I know everything, my dear sir! I know with whom you exchanged declarations of love last night; I know whom you have captivated by your fortunate personal appearance and your eloquence; I know who it is that admits you to her chamber . . . . after ten o'clock at night!"

"Master!"—the coachman suddenly addressed Markéloff.—"Please to take the reins . . . I will get down and look about. . . We seem to

have lost our way. . . There 's a ravine yonder, I think. . . . ."

The tarantás was, in fact, leaning all to one side.

Markéloff seized the reins which the coachman handed to him, and went on, as loudly as before:

" I do not blame you in the least, Alexyéi Dmítritch! You have taken advantage of . . . you were right. I am merely saying that I am not surprised at your having grown cold toward the common cause; that is not what you have on your mind—I will say it once more. And I will add, incidentally, on my own account: where is the man who can divine, in advance, that precisely he is going to please the hearts of maidens—or can comprehend what they desire? . . ."

" I understand you now,"—began Nezhdánoff;—" I understand your distress, I divine who it was that watched us and hastened to communicate to you. . . ."

" Merits do not count, in that case "—pursued Markéloff, feigning not to hear Nezhdánoff, and purposely prolonging and, as it were, intoning every word—" nor any extraordinary spiritual or physical qualities. . . No! It is simply . . . that thrice-accursed luck of all illegitimate children . . of all bastards! "

Markéloff uttered the final phrase swiftly and

vehemently, and suddenly became as mute as though he had swooned.

But even through the darkness Nezhdánoff felt himself turn white all over, and chills ran down his cheeks. He could hardly refrain from hurling himself on Markéloff, from clutching him by the throat. . . . "That insult must be washed out with blood—with blood. . . ."

"I have found the road!"—cried the coachman, making his appearance beside the off front wheel—"I went a little astray, turned to the left . . . it 's all right now!—we 'll get there in a jiffy; it is n't a verst to our house. Please take your seat!"

He climbed on the box, took the reins from Markéloff, turned the shaft-horse to one side. . . The tarantás gave a couple of violent jolts—then it rolled onward more evenly and more speedily—the fog seemed to part and to lift, it curled away like smoke—a sort of hillock started up ahead. Now a light twinkled—it vanished. . . Another twinkled. . . A dog barked. . . .

"Our settlement,"—remarked the coachman; "ekh, you darling kittens!"

The lights came to meet them more and more frequently.

"After this affront,"—said Nezhdánoff, at last,—"you will easily comprehend, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch, that it is impossible for me to pass the night under your roof; and therefore there is

nothing left for me to do, but to ask you, however disagreeable it may be to me, that on reaching home you will let me have your tarantás, which will take me to the town; to-morrow I will find means of getting home;—and from there you will receive from me the intimation which you are, in all likelihood, expecting."

Markéloff did not immediately reply.

"Nezhdánoff,"—he suddenly said, in a low, but almost despairing voice.—"Nezhdánoff! For God's sake, come into my house—if only in order that I may entreat your forgiveness on my bended knees!—Nezhdánoff! Forget . . . forget thou, forget my mad words! Akh, if any one could realise how unhappy I am!"—Markéloff smote himself with his clenched fist on the breast—and something within it seemed to utter a moan.—"Nezhdánoff, be thou magnanimous! Give me thy hand. . . . Do not refuse to forgive me!"

Nezhdánoff put out his hand to him—irresolutely, but still he put it out.—Markéloff squeezed it so hard that the other man came near crying out.

The tarantás drew up at the porch of Markéloff's house.

"Listen, Nezhdánoff,"—Markéloff said to him a quarter of an hour later, in his own study, . . . . "listen." (He no longer addressed him otherwise than as "thou," and in that unexpected

*thou,* applied to the man, in whom he had discovered a happy rival, to whom he had just dealt a bloody insult, whom he had been ready to slay, to rend in pieces—in that "thou" there lay irrevocable renunciation—and submissive, bitter entreaty—and a certain right . . . Nezhdánoff recognised that right in that he himself began to address Markéloff as *thou*).

"Listen! I told thee just now that I had renounced the happiness of love, had repelled it, in order that I might serve my convictions alone. . . . . That is nonsense, boastfulness! Nothing of the sort was ever offered to me, I had nothing to reject! I was born unlucky, and so I have remained. . . Or, perhaps it had to be so.—Therefore, my hands are not set to that—something else awaits me! If thou art able to unite both things . . . to love, and to be loved . . . . and, at the same time, to serve the cause . . . well, then thou art a gallant fellow!—I envy thee . . . . but I myself am not! I cannot. Thou art a lucky man! Thou art a lucky man!—But I cannot."

Markéloff said all this in a quiet voice, as he sat on a low chair, with drooping head, and with arms hanging like whip-lashes. Nezhdánoff was standing in front of him, absorbed in a sort of meditative attention, and although Markéloff had given him the title of a happy man, he neither looked nor felt like one.

"A woman deceived me in my youth . . . ."

went on Markéloff;—"she was a splendid girl, and yet she betrayed me . . and for whom! For a German! for an adjutant!! But Marianna . . . ."

He paused. . . He had uttered her name for the first time, and it seemed to scorch his lips.

"Marianna did not deceive me: she told me plainly that I did not please her. . . And what was there about me to please her?—Well, and she has given herself to thee. . . Well, and what of that? Was not she free?"

"But stay, stay!"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff.—"What art thou saying?—What dost thou mean by saying she has given herself?—I do not know what thy sister has written to thee; but I assure thee . . . ."

"I do not say, physically, but she has given herself morally—with her heart and her soul"—put in Markéloff, who was evidently pleased, for some reason or other, by Nezhdánoff's exclamation.—"And she has done very well indeed. And my sister. . . . Of course, she had no intention of distressing me. . . That is to say, in reality the whole thing is a matter of indifference to her; but it must be that she hates thee—and Marianna also.—She did not lie . . . . however, I have done with her!"

"Yes,"—said Nezhdánoff to himself:—"she does hate us."

"It is all for the best," pursued Markéloff,

not altering his attitude.—"Now the last fetters have been removed from me; now nothing further impedes me! Pay no heed to the fact that Golúshkin is a self-fool: that is nothing. And Kislyakóff's letters . . . possibly they are ridiculous . . . in fact; but thou must pay attention to the principal point. According to his statements . . everything is ready everywhere.—Perhaps thou dost not believe that?"

Nezhdánoff made no answer.

"Perhaps thou art right;—but, thou seest, if we are to wait for the minute when everything —absolutely everything—is ready, the time to begin will never arrive.—For if *all* the consequences are to be weighed in advance, there assuredly will be some bad ones among them. For example, when our predecessors organised the emancipation of the serfs—what then? could they foresee that one of the results of that emancipation would be the appearance of a whole class of usurious landed proprietors who would sell a peasant a quarter of rotten rye for six rubles—and receive from him" (here Markéloff bent down one finger): "in the first place, labour, to the value of the whole six rubles, and, over and above that," —(Markéloff bent down another finger)—"a whole quarter of good rye—and in addition"—(Markéloff bent a third finger)—"with a supplement! that is to say, they suck out the peasant's last drop of blood! For those emancipators

of yours could not foresee this—you must agree! And, nevertheless, even if they had foreseen it, they would have done well in liberating the peasants—and in not weighing all the consequences! And so . . . . my mind is made up!"

Nezhdánoff looked inquiringly and with surprise at Markéloff; but the latter averted his gaze to one side—to a corner. His brows contracted, and covered his eyeballs; he bit his lips and chewed his moustache.

"Yes, my mind is made up!"—he repeated, bringing his hairy, swarthy fist down on his knee with a bang.—"You see, I am stubborn. . . It is not for nothing that I am half Little Russian."

Then he rose, and shuffling his feet as though they had grown feeble, he went into his bedroom, and brought thence a small portrait of Marianna under glass.

"Take it,"—he said, in a sad but even voice; —"I made that once on a time. I draw badly; but look at it, it strikes me that it is like her"—(the portrait, sketched with pencil, in profile, really was a good likeness).—"Take it, brother; this is my last will and testament. Together with this portrait I transfer to thee not my rights . . . I never had any . . . but, thou knowest, everything! I transfer to thee everything—and her. She is a fine girl, brother! . . . ."

Markéloff stopped; his breast was heaving visibly.

"Take it. Surely, thou art not angry with me? Come, take it. But now, I need nothing . . . . of that sort."

Nezhdánoff took the portrait; but a strange feeling oppressed his breast. It seemed to him that he had no right to accept that gift; that, had Markéloff known what he, Nezhdánoff, had on his heart, perhaps he would not have given away that portrait. Nezhdánoff held in his hand that small, circular bit of cardboard, carefully mounted in a narrow black frame, with a slender line of gold paper—and did not know what to do with it.—"Why, this is the man's whole life that I hold in my hand,"—he thought. He understood what a sacrifice Markéloff was making, but why, why to him in particular?—And give away the portrait? No! That would be the most malignant insult yet.—And, in conclusion, that face was dear to him, of course; of course he loved her!

Nezhdánoff raised his eyes to Markéloff, not without some inward terror . . . lest the latter might be gazing at him—might be trying to catch his thought?—But Markéloff's eyes were again riveted on the corner, and he was chewing his moustache.

The aged servant entered the room with a candle in his hand.

Markéloff gave a start.

"It is time to go to bed, brother Alexyéi!"—

he exclaimed.—"The morning is wiser than the evening. I will give thee horses to-morrow—thou shalt drive home—and good-bye to thee."

"Good-bye to thee, also, old fellow!"—he added suddenly, addressing the servant, and tapping him on the shoulder.—"Think kindly of me!"

The old man was so astounded that he came near dropping the candles, and his gaze, fixed on his master, expressed something different from—and greater than his wonted dejection.

Nezhdánoff went away to his room. He felt uncomfortable. His head still ached from the wine he had drunk, there was a ringing in his ears, things flitted before his eyes, although he closed them. Golúshkin, Váska the clerk, Fómushka, Fímushka—spun round and round before him; afar off, the image of Marianna could not make up its mind to approach, as though it felt distrust. Everything he had done and said himself seemed to him so false and such a lie, such useless and mawkish twaddle . . . . and that which ought to be done, that toward which he should strive,—was no one knew where, inaccessible, behind ten locks, buried in the uttermost depths of hell. . . .

And he tried, incessantly, to rise, to go to Markéloff, to say to him: "Take thy gift, take it back!"

"Phew! What a disgusting thing life is!"—he exclaimed at last.

He took his departure early the next morning. Markéloff was already on the porch, surrounded by peasants. Whether he had summoned them, or whether they had come of their own accord, Nezhdánoff did not find out; Markéloff took leave of him in a very curt and monosyllabic way .... but appeared to be making up his mind to communicate to him something important. The old servant was in evidence, also, with his immutable gaze.

The tarantás soon dashed through the town, and turning into the fields, rolled briskly along. —The horses were the same; but the coachman, —whether because Nezhdánoff lived in a wealthy house, or for some other reason, he reckoned upon a fine tip .... nevertheless, it is a well-known fact: when the coachman has had a drink of liquor, or confidently expects one—the horses make excellent speed. It was June weather, though cool; there were lofty sportive clouds in the blue sky, a strong even breeze, the road was free from dust, which had been laid by the rain of the preceding day, the willows were rustling and shimmering and rippling,—everything was stirring and flying,—the cry of the quail was borne, in a shrill whistle, from the distant hillocks, across the green ravines, exactly as though the cry had wings, and were flying with them,—the daws

were gleaming in the sunlight, something resembling dark-hued fleas was walking along the level line of the bare horizon . . . it was peasants ploughing the fallow fields for the second time.

But Nezhdánoff allowed all this to pass him by . . . he did not even notice when he reached the Sipyágin estate—to such a degree was he engrossed in his thoughts.

But he shuddered when he espied the roof of the house, the upper story, the window of Marianna's chamber.—"Yes,"—he said to himself,—and his heart grew warm:—"*he* is right—she is a fine girl—and I love her."

## XXII

He hastily changed his clothes and went to give Kólya his lesson.—Sipyágin, whom he encountered in the dining-room, bowed to him coldly and politely—and, filtering through his teeth the words: "Did you have a good time?"—pursued his way to his study.—The statesman had already determined, in his ministerial mind, that as soon as the vacation was over, he would instantly despatch that "decidedly too handsome" —teacher to Petersburg, and, in the meanwhile, would keep a sharp eye on him.—"*Je n'ai pas eu la main heureuse cette fois-ci,*" he thought to himself; "however, *j'aurais pu tomber pire.*"— Valentína Mikhaílovna's sentiments toward Nezhdánoff were far more energetic and clearly defined. She could no longer tolerate him at all. . . . He, that horrid little boy!—he had insulted her.—Marianna had made no mistake: it was she, Valentína Mikhaílovna, who had played the eavesdropper in the corridor on her and Nezhdánoff. . . . The illustrious lady had not disdained to do this. In the course of the two days during which he had been absent, she, although she said nothing to her "light-minded" relative,

—yet constantly gave her to understand, that she knew all, that she would have been incensed, were it not, in part, that she scorned, in part commiserated her. . . . Repressed, inward disdain filled her cheeks, a sentiment which was both mocking and compassionate elevated her brows when she glanced at Marianna or spoke to her; her wonderful eyes lingered with soft amazement, with sorrowful fastidiousness on the presumptuous young girl who, after all her "freaks and eccentricities," had ended by ki . . . is . . . sing in a dark room a student who had not graduated from the university!

Poor Marianna! Her stern, proud lips had known no kisses as yet.

But Valentína Mikhaílovna never hinted to her husband at the discovery she had made; she contented herself with accompanying the few words which she addressed to Marianna in *his* presence—with an expressive little simper, which had nothing whatever to do with their tenor.—Valentína Mikhaílovna even felt rather repentant for having written that letter to her brother. . . . . But, after all, she preferred to repent, and that the thing should have been done—rather than not repent, and that letter should have remained unwritten.

Nezhdánoff caught a glimpse of Marianna in the dining-room, at breakfast. He thought she had grown thin and sallow: she was not pretty

that day; but the swift glance which she cast at him, as soon as he entered the room, pierced his very heart.—On the other hand, Valentína Mikhaílovna stared at him as though she were constantly repeating inwardly:—"I offer you my congratulations! Very fine, indeed! Very clever!"—and, at the same time, as though she would have liked to read in his countenance whether Markéloff had shown him her letter or not?—She eventually decided that he had shown it.

Sipyágin, on learning that Nezhdánoff had been to the factory which Solómin managed, began to interrogate him about that "establishment, in every respect interesting to industry;"—and becoming promptly convinced, from the young man's replies, that he had actually seen nothing there himself, he relapsed into majestic silence, as though censuring himself for having expected any practical information from such an immature person!—As Marianna quitted the dining-room, she contrived to whisper to Nezhdánoff:

"Wait for me in the old birch-grove, at the end of the park;—I will go there as soon as I can."—Nezhdánoff thought: "She, also, addresses me as 'thou'—just as he did."—And how pleasant, though rather painful, it was to him! . . . and how strange it would have been—yes, fairly impossible—had she suddenly begun

again to call him "you"—if she had turned away from him. . . .

He felt that that would be a misfortune for him.—Whether he was in love with her—he did not yet know; but she had become dear to him—and close to him—and necessary to him . . . . that was the principal thing: necessary—he felt that, with his whole being.

The grove whither Marianna had despatched him consisted of a hundred lofty, ancient, chiefly weeping birches. The wind had not died down; the long tufts of branches swayed and fluttered about like loosely-flowing locks of hair; the clouds, as before, were floating high aloft and swiftly;—and when one of them flitted across the sun, everything round about became, not dark, but uniform in hue.—But now it passed over—and suddenly, everywhere, brilliant flecks of light tossed mutinously again: they became entangled, they shimmered, they intermingled with spots of shadow . . . the sound and the movement were identical; but what a festive joy was added thereto! With the same sort of joyous effort does passion force its way into the darkened heart. . . . And just that sort of a heart did Nezhdánoff bear in his breast.

He leaned against the trunk of a birch-tree and began to wait.—He did not—strictly speaking—know what he felt—and he did not wish to know; he felt more afraid, and more at ease,

than he had at Markéloff's. He wished, first of all, to see her, to talk with her; that knot which suddenly binds two living beings had already seized him in its grasp.—Nezhdánoff called to mind the rope which flies to the shore from the steamer when the latter is about to make a landing. . . . . Now it has encircled a post, and the steamer comes to a halt. . . . .

In port! Thank God!

He suddenly shuddered. A woman's gown was flitting along the path in the distance. It was she. But whether she was approaching him or receding from him, he did not know, until he saw the spots of light and shadow glide across her face *from below upward* . . . which signified that she was approaching. They would have glided *downward from above,* had she been receding. A few moments more and she stood by his side, in front of him, with welcoming, vivacious countenance, with a caressing gleam in her eyes, with lips which smiled faintly but merrily.—He grasped her outstretched hands—but for the moment was unable to articulate a single word;—neither did she say anything. She had walked very rapidly, and was slightly out of breath; but it was obvious that she was greatly rejoiced by his joy.

She was the first to speak.

"Well, what news,"—she began,—"tell me,

as quickly as possible, what you have decided on?"

Nezhdánoff was astonished.

"Decided. . . . Why, was it necessary to decide now?"

"Come, thou understandest me.—Tell me what thou hast talked about? Whom hast thou seen?—Hast thou made acquaintance with Solómin?—Tell me everything . . . . everything! Stay, let us go further away. I know a spot . . . we shall not be visible there."

She drew him after her. He followed her obediently across-lots, through the tall, sparse, dry grass.

She led him to the place she wished. There lay a huge birch, overturned by a tempest. They seated themselves on its trunk.

"Tell me!"—she repeated, but instantly added:—"Akh, how glad I am to see thee! It seemed to me as though those two days would never come to an end. Thou knowest, I am now thoroughly convinced that Valentína Mikhaílovna overheard us."

"She wrote to Markéloff about it,"—said Nezhdánoff.

"To him?"

Marianna paused, and gradually blushed all over,—not with shame, but with another, a more violent emotion.—"The spiteful, wicked woman!"—she whispered slowly:—"she had no

right to do that. . . . Well, it makes no difference! Tell your story, tell your story."

Nezhdánoff began to speak. . . . . Marianna listened to him with a sort of petrified attention —and only interrupted him when she perceived that he was hurrying on, and not pausing over details.—But not all the details of his trip were of equal interest to her; she laughed over Fómushka and Fímushka, but they did not interest her. Their mode of existence was too remote from her.

"It is exactly as though thou wert imparting to me information about Nebuchadnezzar,"—she remarked.

But when it came to what Markéloff said, to what even Golúshkin thought (although she immediately comprehended what sort of a bird he was)—and, most of all, when it came to Solómin's opinion—and to the manner of man he was—that was what she required to know, that was what fretted her. "But when? when?"—that question was constantly whirling in her brain, was rising to her lips, all the while that Nezhdánoff was talking. But he appeared to avoid everything which might afford a decisive answer to that question. He himself began to notice that he was dwelling upon precisely those details which were least interesting to Marianna . . . . and kept incessantly reverting to them. Humorous descriptions evoked her indignation;

a disenchanted or dejected tone grieved her. . . He was obliged to recur constantly to "the cause," to "the question." On those points no prolixity wearied her. Nezhdánoff recalled the time when, while still a student, and living at the villa of some good friends of his, during the summer, he had undertaken to tell the children fairy-stories:—and they, also, had not appreciated either descriptions, or the expression of his personal sentiments . . . . they also had demanded action, facts!—Marianna was no child, but she resembled a child in straightforwardness and simplicity of feeling.

Nezhdánoff praised Markéloff sincerely and warmly—and expressed himself with peculiar sympathy in regard to Solómin. As he spoke of him, in almost exaggerated terms, he asked himself: what, in particular it was which had caused him to cherish so lofty an opinion concerning that man? He had uttered nothing especially clever: some of his remarks even seemed to be at variance with the views of Nezhdánoff himself. . . . "A well-balanced character," he thought:—"that 's what it is; methodical, fresh, as Fímushka said;—a big man; a calm, strong force; he knows what he wants, and has confidence in himself—and he arouses confidence; there is no anxiety in him . . . . and there is equilibrium! equilibrium! . . . . That is the chief thing; precisely what I do not possess." Nezhdánoff relapsed into si-

lence, engrossed in meditation. . . . . All of a sudden he felt the touch of a hand on his shoulder.

He raised his head: Marianna was regarding him with solicitous and tender gaze.

"Friend! what is the matter with thee?"—she asked.

He removed her hand from his shoulder, and, for the first time, he kissed that small, but powerful hand. Marianna laughed a little, as though surprised; what had put such a piece of gallantry into his head?—then she became thoughtful in her turn.

"Did Markéloff show thee Valentína Mikhaílovna's letter?"—she asked at last.

"Yes."

"Well . . and what did he do?"

"He?—He is the noblest, the most self-sacrificing being! He . . . ." Nezhdánoff was on the point of telling Marianna about the portrait—but refrained, and merely repeated:—"the most noble being!"

"Oh, yes, yes!"

Again Marianna fell into thought—and, suddenly turning to Nezhdánoff on the bole of the tree, which served them both as a seat, she said slyly:

"Well, and what did you decide upon?"

Nezhdánoff shrugged his shoulders.

"Why, I have already told thee, that—for the present—nothing is decided upon; we must wait a while yet."

"Wait a while. . . . What for?"

"For the final instructions." ("I am lying," —flashed through Nezhdánoff's mind.)

"From whom?"

"From that . . . thou knowest . . . . from Vasíly Nikoláevitch. And then we must also wait until Ostrodúmoff returns."

Marianna cast a questioning glance at Nezhdánoff.

"Tell me, hast thou ever seen that Vasíly Nikoláevitch?"

"I have seen him a couple of times . . . . had a glimpse of him."

"What is he like . . . . a remarkable man?"

"How shall I describe him to thee? Now he is the head—well, and he manages matters. And we cannot dispense with discipline in our cause; there must be obedience." ("And *that* is all nonsense,"—thought Nezhdánoff to himself.)

"What sort of a man is he?"

"What sort of a man?—very thick-set, ponderous, dark-skinned. . . . He has a face with high cheek-bones, a coarse . . . . Kalmýk face. Only his eyes are very animated."

"And how does he talk?"

"He commands, rather than talks."

"Why has he been made the head?"

"He is a man of strong character. He shrinks from nothing. If necessary—he will commit murder. Well—and he is feared."

"And what sort of a man is Solómin?"

"Solómin, also, is anything but handsome; only, he has a splendid face, simple, and honest. Among theological students—the nice ones—such faces are sometimes to be found."

Nezhdánoff gave a detailed description of Solómin. Marianna gazed at Nezhdánoff for a long . . . . long . . . time, then said, as if to herself:

"Thou, also, hast a fine face. I think one might live happily with thee."

This remark touched Nezhdánoff; he took her hand again—and was on the point of raising it to his lips. . . .

"Defer thy gallantries,"—said Marianna, laughing—she always laughed when her hand was kissed;—"thou dost not know: I am guilty toward thee."

"In what way?"

"In this way.—In thine absence, I went into thy room—and there, on thy table, I saw a note-book with poetry. . . ." (Nezhdánoff shuddered: he remembered that he actually had forgotten that note-book on the table in his room),—"and I make my confession to thee: I could not conquer my curiosity—and I read it.—Assuredly, those are thy verses?"

"Yes; and dost thou know what, Marianna? The fact that I am hardly angry at all with thee may serve thee as the best proof of the degree to

which I am attached to thee, and to which I trust thee."

"Hardly? That means that thou art, at least, a little angry?—By the way, thou callest me Marianna; but I cannot call thee Nezhdánoff! I will call thee Alexyéi. And the poem which begins: 'Dear friend, when I shall die . . . .' is thine also?"

"Yes . . . yes.—Only, please drop the subject. . . . Do not torture me."

Marianna shook her head.

"It is very sad. . . That poem. . . . I hope thou didst write it before thou hadst become close friends with me. But the verses are good, so far as I can judge. It strikes me, that thou mightest become a literary man, only, I am *quite* sure, that thy vocation is something better and more lofty than literature. It was well to occupy thyself with that before,—when the other was impossible."

Nezhdánoff darted a swift glance at her.

"Dost thou think so? Well, I agree with thee. Better ruin there—than success here."

Marianna rose impetuously to her feet.

"Yes, my dear one, thou art right!"—she exclaimed—and her whole face beamed, lighted up with the flame and the lustre of enthusiasm, with the emotion of magnanimous sentiments:—"thou art right!—But, perhaps we shall not go to destruction immediately; we shall succeed, thou wilt

see, we shall be of use, our life will not have been lived in vain, we shall go to the people. . . . Dost thou know any handicraft? No? Well, never mind—we will work, we will bear to them, our brethren, everything which we know—I, if necessary, will go as a cook, as a seamstress, as a laundress. . . . Thou shalt see, thou shalt see. . . . . And there will be no merit in it—only happiness, happiness. . . ."

Marianna ceased speaking; but her eyes, riveted on the distance, not on that which lay outspread before her—but on that other unknown one, which had never yet existed, but which she descried,—her eyes blazed. . . .

Nezhdánoff bent to her waist. . . .

"Oh, Marianna!" he whispered,—"I am not worthy of thee!"

She suddenly gave a violent start.

"It is time to go home—high time!"—she said,—"or they will be hunting us up directly. However, Valentína Mikhaílovna seems to have washed her hands of me. In her eyes, I am—a lost woman!"

Marianna uttered the last two words with such a bright, joyous face, that Nezhdánoff, as he looked at her, could not help smiling and repeating—"a lost woman!"

"Only, she feels deeply insulted,"—went on Marianna, "because thou art not at her feet.—But all that is nothing—but see here. . . Of

course, it is impossible for me to remain here . . . I must run away."

"Run away?"—repeated Nezhdánoff.

"Yes, run away. . . For, surely, thou art not going to remain?—We will go away together. . . . Thou wilt go with me, wilt thou not?"

"To the ends of the earth!"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff—and a certain impulsive gratitude suddenly rang out in his voice.—"To the ends of the earth!"—At that moment he actually would have gone away with her, with a glance behind him, whithersoever she desired!

Marianna understood him—and heaved a gentle, blissful sigh.

"Then take my hand . . . only, do not kiss it—and press it firmly, as a comrade, as a friend . . there, that 's the way!"

They walked homeward together, thoughtful, happy,—the young grass caressed their feet, the young foliage rustled round about them; the patches of light and shadow flitted swiftly athwart their garments—and they both smiled at this tremulous play, and at the gay gusts of wind, and the fresh glitter of the leaves—and at their own youth, and at each other.

# VIRGIN SOIL

(1876)

# PART SECOND

## XXIII

THE glow of dawn was already beginning in the sky when, on the night following the dinner at Golúshkin's, Solómin, having briskly walked about five versts, tapped at the wicket-gate in the tall fence which surrounded the factory. The watchman immediately admitted him —and accompanied by three watch-dogs, of the sheep-dog breed, who wagged their shaggy tails in broad sweeps, conducted him with solicitous respect to his detached wing.—He was, evidently, delighted at the safe return of his superior.

"What made you come home by night, Vasíly Feodótitch? We did not expect you until to-morrow."

"Never mind, Gavrílo; it is pleasanter walking by night."

Good, although not altogether usual, relations existed between Solómin and the factory-hands; they respected him as their superior—and they treated him like an equal, like one of themselves: only, he was knowing in their eyes!—"What Vasíly Feodótoff has said,"—they were wont to explain,—"is sacred! for he has passed through

all wisdom—and there is n't an Englishman alive whom he cannot outdo!"—As a matter of fact, an important English manufacturer once visited the factory; and, either because Solómin talked English with him,—or because he really was struck by his knowledge,—he slapped him on the shoulder, and laughed, and invited him to go to Liverpool with him;—and to the factory-hands he said, in his broken Russian: "This is a good man you have here! Ou! good!" . . at which the hands laughed a good deal in their turn, not without pride: "See now, that 's what our fellows all like!—And he 's one of us!"

And he really was theirs—and one of them.

Early the next morning, his favourite, Pável, entered Solómin's room; he waked him, gave him washing materials, made some remark, narrated some fact, asked some question. Then they hastily drank tea together—and Solómin, drawing on his greasy, grey working-jacket, went off to the factory—and his life began to revolve again, like a huge fly-wheel.

But a new stoppage was decreed.

Five days after Solómin's return home a handsome little phaëton, drawn by four fine horses, drove into the factory-yard,—and a lackey, clad in yellowish-grey livery, on being conducted by Pável to the wing, solemnly handed to Solómin a letter with an armorial seal—from "His Excellency, Borís Andréevitch Sipyágin."—In that

letter, which was scented, not with perfumes—fie! —but with a certain remarkably decorous English odour, and written—although in the third person—yet not by a secretary, but by the hand of the General himself, the enlightened owner of the church-village of Arzhánoe, after first making his apologies for addressing a man who was personally a stranger to him,—but concerning whom he, Sipyágin, had heard very flattering accounts,—took upon himself "the liberty" to invite to his country-place Mr. Solómin, whose advice would be of extraordinary value to him, Sipyágin, in a certain industrial enterprise; and in the hope of an amiable assent on the part of Mr. Solómin—he, Sipyágin, had sent an equipage for him.—But, in case Mr. Solómin should find it impossible to absent himself on that particular day, he, Sipyágin, respectfully requested Mr. Solómin to appoint any other day which would be agreeable to him,—and he, Sipyágin, would gladly place that same equipage at the disposal of Mr. Solómin. Then followed the customary declarations,—and, at the end of the letter there was a postscript, this time in the first person. "I hope that you will not refuse to lunch with me *informally*, in your sack-coat." (The word "informally" was underlined.) Along with this letter, the pale-grey liveried lackey, with a sort of perturbation, apparently, also handed to Solómin a simple note from Nezh-

dánoff, which was not sealed, but merely gummed together, and which contained only a few words: "Pray come, you are greatly needed here—and you may be of use;—only, of course, not to Mr. Sipyágin."

On reading Sipyágin's letter, Solómin thought: "And how was I to go, except informally? I have no dress-coat at the mill. . . And what the devil should I run off there for . . . . and merely waste time!"—but, on glancing over Nezhdánoff's note, he scratched the back of his head, and walked to the window, irresolutely.

"What answer are you pleased to give?"—inquired the light-grey lackey with stateliness.

Solómin stood for a while longer at the window—and at last shook back his hair, and passing his hand across his brow, he said:

"I will go.—Give me time to change my clothes."

The lackey decorously withdrew, and Solómin gave orders that Pável should be summoned, had a talk with him, ran over to the factory once more—and, donning a black coat, with a very long waist, which had been made for him by a country tailor, and a somewhat rusty tall hat, which immediately imparted to his face a wooden expression, he seated himself in the phaëton—but suddenly remembered that he had not taken any gloves with him; shouted for the "omnipresent" Pável, and the latter brought him a pair of

freshly-washed white chamois-leather gloves, each finger of which, widening out toward the end, resembled a biscuit. Solómin thrust the gloves into his pocket, and said that they might start. Then the lackey, with a sort of unexpected, utterly superfluous fool-hardiness, sprang to the box—the well-drilled coachman gave a falsetto whistle—and the horses set out on a run.

While they were gradually bringing Solómin nearer and nearer to Sipyágin's estate—that statesman, seated in his drawing-room, with a political pamphlet, whose leaves were only half-cut, on his knees, was talking about him to his wife. He assured her that he had merely sent for him, in order to try whether he could not lure him away from the merchant's factory to his own, as the latter was getting into a wretched condition, and required radical reforms!—Sipyágin did not care to dwell upon the thought that Solómin might refuse to come, or might even appoint another day, notwithstanding the fact that in his own letter to Solómin he had given him the choice of a day.

"But ours is a writing-paper factory, not a cotton-spinning factory,"—remarked Valentína Mikhaílovna.

"It makes no difference, my dear: there are machines there,—and machines here . . . and he is a mechanic!"

"But perhaps he is a specialist!"

"My dear, in the first place—there are no specialists in Russia; and, in the second place—I repeat to thee: he is a mechanic!"

Valentína Mikhaílovna smiled.

"See here, my friend; thou hast had no luck once before with young men; I trust thou art not about to make a second mistake!"

"Dost thou refer to Nezhdánoff?—But, it strikes me that I have attained my object: he is a good rehearsal-tutor for Kólya. And then, thou knowest: *non bis in idem!* Pray pardon me for my pedantry. . . That means, that the same thing does not happen twice."

"Dost thou think so?—But *I* think that every thing on earth repeats itself . . . especially that which is in the nature of things . . . . and especially among young people."

"*Que voulez vous dire?*"—asked Sipyágin, flinging his pamphlet on the table with a circular gesture.

"*Ouvrez les yeux—et vous verrez!*"—replied Madame Sipyágin; of course, they called each other "you" in French.

"Hm!"—ejaculated Sipyágin.—"Dost thou mean the student?"

"Yes."

"Hm!—has anything developed in him . . . . here?" (He fluttered his hand around his forehead.) "Hey?"

"Open thine eyes!"

"Marianna? Hey?"—(The second "Hey?" was uttered more through his nose than the first.)

"Open thine eyes, I tell thee!"

Sipyágin frowned.

"Well, we will look into that later on.—But now, I have only one thing to say. . . . That Solómin will, in all probability, be somewhat embarrassed . . . well, it is easy to understand he is n't used to things.—So we must be particularly affable with him . . . in order not to frighten him. I am not saying that for thy benefit; thou art—genuine gold; and thou canst fascinate any one thou wishest, in a twinkling.—*J'en sais quelque chose, madame!*—I am saying this for the benefit of others;—now, for instance, for the benefit of that. . . ."

He pointed to a fashionable, grey hat which lay on the étagère: that hat belonged to Mr. Kallomyeítzeff, who had been in Arzhánoe since the morning.

"*Il est très cassant,* as thou knowest; he greatly despises the common people, . . . . which is a thing that I . . . . condemn! Moreover, I have noticed in him, for some time past, a certain irritability, a quarrelsome disposition. . Are not his affairs—*there*—" (Sipyágin nodded his head in an indefinite direction, . . . . but his wife understood him)—"going well? Hey?"

"Open thine eyes—I tell thee again."

Sipyágin half-rose.

"Hey?"—(That "Hey?" was of an entirely different quality, and in a different tone . . . a much lower tone.)—"So that's it! How could I have failed to see through them long ago!"

"That is thine affair;—and as for this new young man of thy—if only he come to-day—there is no need for thee to be anxious on his account; all precautionary measures will be taken."

And what happened? It turned out that no precautionary measures whatever were required: Solómin was not in the slightest degree embarrassed or frightened.—When the servant announced him Sipyágin immediately rose, said loudly, so that his words were audible in the anteroom: "Ask him in! ask him in, of course!"—advanced to the drawing-room door, and stood close in front of it. As soon as Solómin had crossed the threshold, Sipyágin, whom he had come near running into, offered him both hands, and displaying his teeth in an affable smile, and lolling his head, saying cordially—"how good of you . . . how grateful I am to you"—he led him to Valentína Mikhaílovna.

"This is my little wife,"—he said, softly pressing Solómin's back with his palm—and, as it were, pushing him forward to Valentína Mikhaílovna,—"and here, my dear, is our leading mechanician and factory-expert of these parts. Vasíly . . . Feodósyevitch Solómin."—Madame

Sipyágin rose, and with a beautiful upward sweep of her wonderful eyelashes, she first smiled at him—good-naturedly, as at an acquaintance; then offered him her hand, palm upward, pressing her elbow to her waist, and inclining her head on the side toward her hand . . . as though she were a suppliant. Solómin allowed the husband and wife to play off all their little tricks before him, shook his hand, and hers,—and seated himself at the first invitation. Sipyágin began to feel uneasy—did not he want something? But Solómin replied that he wanted nothing, that he was not in the least fatigued by the journey—and was entirely at his service.

"In that case, may I ask you to be so good as to come to my factory?"—he exclaimed, as though conscience-stricken, and not daring to believe in so much condescension on the part of his visitor.

"At once, if you like,"—replied Solómin.

"Akh, how obliging you are! Would you like to have the drozhky harnessed up, or—perhaps you prefer to walk. . . ."

"Why, your factory is not far from here, is it?"

"Half a verst, not any more than that."

"Then what is the use of harnessing up a carriage?"

"Well, that 's capital. Here—man,—give me my hat, my cane, make haste!—And do thou,

housewife, bustle about, and prepare dinner for us!—My hat!"

Sipyágin was far more agitated than his guest. Repeating once more:—"but where in the world is that hat of mine!"—he, the dignitary! ran out like a frolicsome schoolboy.—While he was talking with Solómin, Valentína Mikhaílovna had been scrutinising this "new young man," stealthily but attentively.—He sat quietly on his chair, with both his bare hands lying on his knees (he had not put on his gloves, after all—and was surveying the furniture and the pictures with composure, although with curiosity).—"What sort of a fellow is this?" she thought.—"A plebeian . . . an unmistakable plebeian . . . . and yet he behaves himself so simply!"—In fact, Solómin did behave very simply, not like some others, who are simple—with vehemence, as much as to say: "Look at me, and understand what sort of a person I am!"—but like a man whose thoughts and feelings are not complicated, although they are strong. Madame Sipyágin made an attempt to chat with him—and, to her own amazement, could not immediately manage it.

"Good Lord!" she said to herself; "can it be possible that that factory-hand is impressing me with awe?"

"Borís Andréitch must be very grateful to you,"—she said at last—"for having sacrificed a portion of your valuable time to him. . . ."

"It is not so extremely valuable, madame,"—replied Solómin:—"and I shall not be with you long, you know."

"*Voilà que l'ours a montré sa patte,*" she said to herself in French; but at that moment her husband made his appearance on the threshold of the open door, hat on head and "stick" in hand.

"Vasíly Feodósyeitch! Are you ready?"

Solómin rose, bowed to Valentína Mikhaílovna, and followed Sipyágin.

"Follow me, this way, this way, Vasíly Feodósyeitch!"—Sipyágin kept repeating, exactly as though they were forcing their way through some dense forest—and Solómin required a guide.—"This way! there are steps here, Vasíly Feodósyeitch!"

"If you wish to address me by my patronymic,"—said Solómin, in a leisurely way, . . . . "I am not Feodósyeitch,—but Feodótitch."

Sipyágin cast a backward glance at him over his shoulder, almost in affright.

"Akh, pardon me, pray, Vasíly Feodótitch!"

"Certainly, sir, it is of no consequence."

They emerged into the courtyard.—Kallomyeítzeff chanced to meet them.

"Whither are you bound?"—he asked, with an oblique glance at Solómin.—"To the factory? *C'est là l'individu en question?*"

Sipyágin opened his eyes very wide, and shook his head, as a signal of warning.

"Yes, to the factory . . . . to exhibit my sins and blunders—to Mr. Mechanician here. Permit me to introduce you: Mr. Kallomyeítzeff, a landed proprietor of this neighbourhood; Mr. Solómin. . ."

Kallomyeítzeff gave a couple of nods—which were barely perceptible, and not in Solómin's direction at all—and without casting even a glance at him.—But the latter looked full at Kallomyeítzeff, and into his half-closed eyes there came a flash of something. . . .

"May I join you?"—asked Kallomyeítzeff. —"You know I love to inform myself."

"Of course you may."

They emerged from the courtyard upon the highway,—and before they had advanced twenty paces, they espied the parish priest, with his cassock tucked up, wending his way homeward, to the so-called "priests' suburb." Kallomyeítzeff immediately abandoned his two companions,—and with long, firm strides, approaching the priest, who was not in the least expecting this, and was somewhat abashed—he asked for his blessing, noisily kissed his red, perspiring hand, —and, turning round to Solómin, darted a challenging glance at him. It was evident that he knew "something" about him—and wanted to show off, and jeer at him.

"*C'est une manifestation, mon cher?*"—hissed Sipyágin through his teeth.

Kallomyeítzeff snorted.

"*Oui, mon cher, une manifestation nécessaire par le temps qui court!*"

They reached the factory. They were received by a Little Russian with a huge beard and false teeth, who had superseded the former superintendent, the German, whom Sipyágin had definitively discharged. This Little Russian was temporary: he obviously did not understand anything, and merely kept saying: "thata . . . . I vill go . . ." and sighing.

The inspection of the establishment began. Several of the hands knew Solómin by sight, and bowed to him.—He even said to one of them: "Good morning, Grigóry. Art thou here?"—He speedily convinced himself that matters were in a bad way. A vast amount of money had been spent, and to no purpose. The machinery proved to be of bad quality; there was much that was superfluous and unnecessary, while much that was necessary was lacking. Sipyágin kept incessantly gazing into Solómin's eyes, in order to divine his opinion; he put timid queries, wanted to know whether, at least, he was satisfied with the state of things?

"Things are in a fair condition,"—replied Solómin,—"but can there be any income? I doubt it."

Not only Sipyágin, but even Kallomyeítzeff recognised the fact that in the factory Solómin

was quite at home, that everything about it was well known, familiar to him, down to the smallest detail; that he was the master there. He laid his hand on a machine as a horseman lays his on the neck of a horse; he poked a wheel with his finger—and it stopped, or began to revolve; he took out of the vat into his palm a little of the pulp from which the paper was made—and it immediately displayed all its defects. Solómin said little, and never looked at the bearded Little Russian at all; in silence, also, did he emerge from the factory. Sipyágin and Kallomyeítzeff followed him.

Sipyágin did not order any one to escort him . . . he even stamped his foot and gnashed his teeth! He was greatly discomfited.

"I discern from your face,"—he said, addressing Solómin, "that you are dissatisfied with my factory,—and I myself know that it is in an unsatisfactory condition, and yields no returns; but, as a matter of fact . . . . pray do not stand on ceremony . . . what are its most important faults? And what ought to be done to improve it?"

"The manufacture of writing-paper is not in my line,"—replied Solómin; "but one thing I can tell you;—industrial enterprises are no business for noblemen."

"You regard those occupations as degrading for the nobility?"—interposed Kallomyeítzeff.

Solómin smiled with his expansive smile.

"Oh, no! Good gracious, no! What is there degrading about it? But even if there were anything of that sort—the nobility would not disdain it."

"What, sir? What 's the meaning of this, sir?"

"All I mean to say,"—went on Solómin, quietly,—"is, that the nobility have not become accustomed to this sort of activity.—For that, commercial foresight is requisite; everything must be placed on a different footing; staying-power is necessary. The nobility do not take these things into consideration. We frequently see them setting up cloth-mills, paper-mills, and other sorts of mills; and, in the end, into whose hands do those factories fall? into the hands of merchants. It is a pity, because a merchant is identical with a bloodsucker, only there is no help for it."

"If one were to heed you,"—shouted Kallomyeítzeff,—"financial problems are beyond the capacity of us nobles?"

"Oh, on the contrary! the nobles are masterhands at that sort of thing. No one is so clever at obtaining a concession for a railway, at setting up a bank, at securing for himself any sort of privilege, as a nobleman! They make great fortunes. That was precisely what I was alluding to—when you were pleased to get angry. But I had in view legitimate industrial enterprises; I say: le-

gitimate enterprises—because, setting up their own pot-houses and little retail shops on the basis of barter, and lending the peasants money at a hundred and fifty per cent.—as many of the noble landed proprietors are now engaged in doing—I cannot regard such operations as genuine financial transactions."

Kallomyeítzeff made no reply. He belonged precisely to that new category of usurious landed proprietors, to whom Markéloff had alluded in his last conversation with Nezhdánoff,—and he was all the more inhuman in his demands, because he, personally, never came into direct contact with the peasants—let no one dare to admit them to his perfumed, European study!—but had his dealings with them through an overseer. As he listened to Solómin's leisurely, and apparently impartial speech, he was all seething inwardly . . . but he held his peace for that time, and only the play of the muscles in his cheeks, produced by the compression of his jaws, betrayed what was going on within him.

"But allow me, allow me, Vasíly Feodótitch," —put in Sipyágin:—"Everything you are expounding to us was perfectly true in former times, when the nobles enjoyed . . . entirely different rights, and, altogether, found themselves in a different position. But now, after all the benevolent reforms in our industrial age, why cannot the nobles direct their attention, their capacities,

in short, to such undertakings? Why cannot they understand that which a simple merchant—who frequently does not know how to read and write —understands? For they do not suffer from a lack of education—and one may affirm with confidence that they are, in a certain sense, the representatives of enlightenment and of progress!"

Borís Andréitch talked very well; his eloquence would have made a hit anywhere in Petersburg —in the department—or even in higher spheres, but it produced no impression whatever upon Solómin.

"The nobles cannot manage such enterprises,"—he repeated.

"But why? why?"—Kallomyeítzeff almost yelled.

"Because they are identical with officials."

"Officials?"—Kallomyeítzeff burst into a vicious laugh.—"You probably do not know what you are talking about, Mr. Solómin?"

Solómin did not cease to smile.

"What makes you think that, Mr. Kaloméntzeff?"—(Kallomyeítzeff fairly shuddered at hearing such a "distortion" of his surname.) —"Yes, I always know what I am talking about."

"Then explain what you meant to intimate by your phrase."

"Very well; in my opinion, every official is

a stranger, and always has been so, and the nobleman has now *become* a stranger."

Kallomyeítzeff laughed more violently than ever.

"Well, you must excuse me, my dear sir; I do not understand that in the least!"

"So much the worse for you. Make an effort . . . perhaps you will understand."

"My dear sir!"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen,"—interposed Sipyágin, hastily, as though looking for some one from below him.—"Pray, pray . . Kallomyeítzeff, *je vous prie de vous calmer.* Yes, and dinner must be ready very soon. I beg that you will follow me, gentlemen!"

"Valentína Mikhaílovna!"—shouted Kallomyeítzeff, five minutes later, rushing into her boudoir.—"I never saw the like of this in all my life, the way your husband is going on! He has established one nihilist in his house, and now he has imported another! And this one is worse than the other!"

"Why so?"

"Good gracious, he is preaching the devil knows what; and more than that—note one thing: he has talked with your husband for a whole hour, and not once, *not once,* has he called him 'your excellency!'—*Le vagabond!*"

## XXIV

BEFORE dinner, Sipyágin called his wife aside into the library. He found it necessary to have a private conference with her. He appeared anxious. He communicated to her that the factory was in a decidedly bad way, that that Solómin seemed to him a very practical man, although a little . . . . abrupt, and that they must continue to be *aux petits soins* with him still.—"Akh, what a fine thing it would be to entice him away!" he repeated a couple of times. Sipyágin was greatly vexed at Kallomyeítzeff's presence. . . . The devil had brought him! He espied nihilists everywhere—and thought of nothing else than of how to exterminate them! Well, let him exterminate them at his own house! He cannot keep his tongue behind his teeth!

Valentína Mikhaílovna remarked that she was delighted to be "*aux petits soins*" with this new guest; only, apparently, he cared nothing for those "*petits soins*," and paid no heed to them; he was not exactly rude, but somehow extremely indifferent, which was very surprising in a man —*du commun*.

"Never mind . . . . make an effort!"—entreated Sipyágin.

Valentína Mikhaílovna promised to make an effort—and did make it. She began by having a tête-à-tête talk with Kallomyeítzeff. What she said is not on record, but he came to the table with the aspect of a man who has "taken it upon himself" to be peaceable and discreet, whatever he may hear. This opportune "resignation" imparted to his whole being a slight tinge of sadness; on the other hand, how much dignity .... oh, how much dignity was contained in his every movement! Valentína Mikhaílovna introduced Solómin to all the members of her household ... (he gazed more attentively at Marianna than at any of the others)—and at table, placed him by her own side, on her right hand. Kallomyeítzeff sat on her left. As he unfolded his napkin, he narrowed his eyes and smiled, as though he would have liked to say: "Well, ma'am, let 's play the comedy!" Sipyágin sat opposite, and watched him with some trepidation. By this new arrangement of the hostess, Nezhdánoff found himself not beside Marianna, but between Anna Zakhárovna and Sipyágin. Marianna found her place-card (as the dinner was one of ceremony), on the napkin between Kallomyeítzeff's place and Kólya's.—The dinner was served in capital style; there was even a "menu"; a decorated sheet of paper lay before each place. Immediately after the soup, Sipyágin again led the conversation to the factory—to factory industry

in Russia, as a whole; Solómin replied very briefly, as was his wont. As soon as he began to speak, Marianna fixed her eyes on him. Kallomyeítzeff, who sat beside her, made an attempt to pay her divers compliments (as he had been requested, "not to stir up a discussion"), but she did not listen to him; moreover, he uttered his compliments in a languid tone, merely to clear his conscience: he recognised the fact that between him and the young girl there existed some insuperable barrier.

As for Nezhdánoff—something still worse had suddenly been erected between him and the master of the house. . . . For Sipyágin, Nezhdánoff had become merely an article of furniture—or an airy space, which he did not perceive at all—precisely that—did not perceive at all! These new relations had established themselves so swiftly and so indubitably, that when Nezhdánoff, in the course of the dinner, uttered a few words in reply to a remark from his neighbour, Anna Zakhárovna, Sipyágin cast a glance around him, as though he were asking himself: "Where does that sound come from?"

Obviously, Sipyágin possessed some of the qualities which distinguish dignitaries of great importance.

After the fish, Valentína Mikhaílovna, who on her side was lavishing all her fascinations on her right hand, that is to say, on Solómin, remarked,

in English, across the table to her husband, "our guest is not drinking his wine; perhaps he would like some beer. . . ." Sipyágin loudly called for some "ale," but Solómin, turning calmly to Valentína Mikhaílovna, said to her—"probably, you are not aware, madame, that I have lived in England for two years—and that I understand and speak English; and I am warning you of that fact, in case you should wish to say anything of a private nature in my presence!" Valentína Mikhaílovna laughed, and began to assure him that that warning was needless, as he would have heard nothing but good about himself; but she considered Solómin's behaviour rather strange, although delicate, according to his lights.

At this point, Kallomyeítzeff could no longer restrain himself.

"So you have been in England,"—he began,—"and probably you have observed the customs there. Permit me to ask whether you regard them as worthy of imitation?"

"Some of them, yes—others, no."

"Curt, and not clear,"—remarked Kallomyeítzeff, endeavouring to pay no heed to the signs which Sipyágin was making to him.—"But you were talking to-day about the nobles. . . . Of course you have had an opportunity of studying on the spot what is called in England the landed gentry?"

"No, I did not have an opportunity; I moved

in a totally different sphere—but I formed an idea of those gentlemen."

"Really? And do you assume that such a landed gentry is impossible among us? And that, in any case, it is undesirable?"

"In the first place, I really do assume that it is impossible; and, in the second place, that it is not worth while to desire it."

"Why, sir, so, sir?"—said Kallomyeítzeff.—These two "sirs" were intended to serve the purpose of soothing Sipyágin, who was greatly agitated, and was even fidgeting about on his chair.

"Because, in twenty or thirty years from now we shall have no landed gentry anyway."

"But, permit me, sir; why, sir, so, sir?"

"Because, by that time the land will belong to its holders—without regard to their origin."

"To the merchants, sir?"

"Probably, for the main part, to the merchants."

"In what manner?"

"Because they will purchase it—that same land."

"From the nobles?"

"From the Messrs. Nobles."

Kallomyeítzeff displayed his teeth in a condescending grin.—"I remember that you recently said the same thing about the factories and mills, and now you say it about all the land."

"And now I say it about all the land."

"And you will, probably, be very glad of it!"

"Not in the least, for, as I have already informed you, the people will not be any the better off for it."

Kallomyeítzeff raised one hand slightly.—"What solicitude for the people—just think of it!"

"Vasíly Feodótitch!"—shouted Sipyágin at the top of his voice.—"They have brought your beer.—*Voyons, Siméon!*"—he added, in an undertone.

But Kallomyeítzeff did not stop.

"I see," he began again, addressing Solómin,—"that you do not entertain any too flattering an opinion of the merchants; but, assuredly, they belong, by extraction, to the common people?"

"What of that, sir?"

"I supposed that you thought everything connected with the common people very fine indeed."

"Oh, no, sir! You were mistaken in that assumption. Our people may be censured in many respects, although it is not always to blame. Up to the present time, the merchant with us is a highwayman; and he manages his own property also like a highwayman. . . . What are you going to do about it! They rob you . . and you rob. But the people . . . ."

"The people?" questioned Kallomyeítzeff.

"The people—is a sleeper."

"And you would like to wake him up?"

"It would not be a bad idea."

"Aha! aha! so that, sir, is . . . ."

"Permit me, permit me,"—said Sipyágin, in an authoritative voice. He comprehended that the moment had arrived when he must, so to speak, draw the line . . . stop him! And he drew the line. He stopped him. Dangling the wrist of his right arm, the elbow of which remained resting on the table, he uttered a long, circumstantial speech. On the one hand, he praised the conservatives,—and on the other, he approved of the liberals, according to these last some preference, and counting himself among their ranks; he exalted the common people,—but pointed out several of its weak sides; he expressed entire confidence in the government—but asked himself: did *all* its subjects carry out its beneficial intentions? He recognised the usefulness and the importance of literature, but declared that without extreme caution, it was not to be thought of! He cast a glance at the West—then had doubts; he cast a glance at the East: at first he sighed, then gave a start! And, in conclusion, he suggested that they drink a toast to the prosperity of the Triple Alliance:

"RELIGION, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRY."

"Under the ægis of authority!"—added Kallomyeítzeff, severely.

"Under the ægis of a wise and gracious authority,"—Sipyágin corrected him.

The toast was drunk in silence.—The airy space on Sipyágin's left, named Nezhdánoff, did, it is true, utter some sound of disapproval—but as it attracted no attention it subsided again—and, disturbed by no fresh discussion, the dinner came safely to an end.

Valentína Mikhaílovna handed Solómin his coffee with the most charming smile; he drank it—and was already looking about for his hat .... but his arm was softly drawn through Sipyágin's, and he was immediately led off to the latter's study—and received, in the first place, a capital cigar, and then a proposition to come to his, Sipyágin's factory, on advantageous terms!—"You shall be the complete master, Vasíly Feodótitch, the complete master!"—Solómin accepted the cigar; he declined the proposal. Urge him as Sipyágin might, he stuck to his refusal.

"Do not say 'no' outright—my dearest Vasíly Feodótitch!—say, at least, that you will think it over until to-morrow."

"But it makes no difference,—I cannot accept your proposal."

"Until to-morrow, Vasíly Feodótitch!—What does that cost you?"

Solómin agreed that it would cost him nothing . . . . but he quitted the study, and again began to look for his hat. But Nezhdánoff, who had not succeeded, up to that moment, in exchanging a single word with him, approached him, and whispered hastily.

" For God's sake, do not go away, or it will be impossible for us to talk matters over together! "

Solómin left his hat alone, the more readily, because Sipyágin, noticing his irresolute movements to and fro in the drawing-room, called out:

" Of course, you are going to spend the night with us? "

" At your service,"—replied Solómin.

The grateful glance which Marianna flung at him,—she was standing by a window in the drawing-room,—rendered him thoughtful.

## XXV

UNTIL Solómin arrived Marianna had imagined him to be quite different from what he was in reality. At first glance, he had struck her as indefinite, impersonal. . . . . Unquestionably: in her day she had seen many such fair-haired, sinewy, lean men! But the more she scrutinised him, the more she listened to his remarks, the stronger did her feeling of confidence—precisely that, of confidence—in him become.—That calm, not exactly awkward, but ponderous man not only could not lie—dissimulate; one could rely upon him, as upon a stone wall. . . . He would not betray: he would understand and uphold.—It even seemed to Marianna that not in herself alone, but in all the persons present, Solómin had aroused that sort of feeling. She attached no special weight to what he said; all those discussions about merchants and factories interested her little; but the way he talked, the way he looked while so doing, and smiled,—that pleased her extremely. . .

An upright man . . . that is the chief point! that was what touched her.—It is a familiar, but not wholly explicable phenomenon: the Russians are the worst liars in the world; but they respect no-

thing so much as the truth—they feel such great sympathy for nothing else as for it.—Moreover, in Marianna's eyes, there was a special stamp upon Solómin; on him rested the aureole of the man whom Vasíly Nikoláevitch himself had recommended to his followers. In the course of dinner Marianna exchanged several glances "on his account" with Nezhdánoff, and, in the end, she suddenly caught herself involuntarily making comparisons between the two men—and not to the advantage of Nezhdánoff. Nezhdánoff's features were, it is true, far handsomer and more agreeable than Solómin's;—but the face itself expressed a mixture of various uneasy emotions: vexation, perturbation, impatience . . . even dejection; he sat as though on needles and pins, tried to speak—and relapsed into silence, laughed nervously. . . Solómin, on the contrary, produced the impression of being somewhat bored, perhaps, but of being, notwithstanding, quite at home; and that he was the sort of man who would never in any wise regard "what others do."—"Decidedly, I must ask the advice of that man,"—thought Marianna; "he will certainly say something useful."—After dinner it was *she* who sent Nezhdánoff to him.

The evening passed rather heavily; fortunately, the dinner ended late, and only a short time remained before night. Kallomyeítzeff politely sulked and held his peace.

"What is the matter with you?"—Sipyágin asked him, half mockingly.—"Have you lost anything?"

"Just that, sir,"—responded Kallomyeítzeff. "They tell a story about one of the commanders of our Guards, to the effect that he mourned because his soldiers lost their 'bayonets.' . . . 'Find me the bayonets!' And I say: Find me the respectful 'sir'!—The 'sir' is lost—and with it all reverence and respect for rank."

Sipyágin announced to Kallomyeítzeff that he would not assist him in his search.

Encouraged by the success of his "speech" at dinner, Sipyágin made a couple more speeches, in which he introduced several governmental views as to indispensably necessary measures; he also made a few jokes—*des mots*,—not so much witty as weighty,—which he had prepared specially for Petersburg consumption. He even repeated one of these jokes, preceding it with: "If it is permissible to express one's self in that manner." He said, concerning one of the reigning ministers, that he had an inconstant and empty mind, directed to visionary ends.—On the other hand, Sipyágin, not forgetting that he had to deal with a Russian,—one of the people,—did not neglect to show off with a few phrases, which were intended to prove that he himself was not only a Russian, but a "Russian of the Russians," and intimately acquainted with the very core of

popular life!—Thus, for example, in reply to Kallomyeítzeff's remark that rain might interfere with gathering in the hay-crop, he immediately responded that "what makes the hay black makes the buckwheat white";—he also employed adages, such as: "Wares without a master are orphans";—"Measure ten times, cut off once";—"When there is grain, the measure will be found";—"If there are leaves on the birch-tree at St. George's day, you may put the grain in the cask at the feast of the Kazán Birth-giver of God."[1]—To tell the truth, he occasionally made a mistake, and said, for example: "Snipe, know thine own hearth,"—or, "The corners are what make a cottage fine!"[2]—But the company in whose midst these misfortunes occurred had, for the most part, no suspicion that "*notre bon rusak*" had committed a blunder at these points; and, thanks to Prince Kovrízhkin, it had already become used to "interpolations" of that sort.—And all these adages and apothegms Sipyágin uttered in a certain peculiar, hearty, even rather hoarse voice—*d'une voix rustique.* — Similar apothegms, opportunely and appropriately enunciated by him in Petersburg,

[1] St. George's day, April 23, O. S. (May 5, N. S.): The day of the Kazán ikona of the Holy Virgin, October 22, O. S. (November 4, N. S.).—TRANSLATOR.

[2] He should have said, respectively: "Cricket, know thy hearth" (Every man to his own trade), and "It is not corners (i.e., corners decorated with holy pictures), but patties (food), which make a cottage fine."—TRANSLATOR.

had caused highly-placed, influential ladies to exclaim:—"*Comme il connait bien les mœurs de notre peuple!*" And highly-placed, influential dignitaries added:—"*Les mœurs et les besoins!*"

Valentína Mikhaílovna put herself to great pains over Solómin, but the obvious lack of success of her efforts discouraged her;—and, as she passed Kallomyeítzeff, she involuntarily remarked in an undertone: "*Mon Dieu, que je me sens fatiguée!*"

To which the latter responded, with an ironical bow:

"*Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin!*"

At last, after the customary flash of amiability and courtesy which makes its appearance on the countenances of a bored company at the very moment of parting, after the sudden handshakes, smiles, and friendly sobs through the nose —the weary guests, the weary hosts separated.

Solómin, who had been assigned to about the best room in the second story, with English toilet accessories and a bath-room, betook himself to Nezhdánoff.

The latter began by thanking him warmly for consenting to remain.

"I know . . . it is a sacrifice for you . . . ."

"Eh! stop that!"—replied Solómin, deliberately.—"Where is the sacrifice?—And, moreover, I cannot refuse *you*."

"Why?"

"Because I have taken a liking to you."

Nezhdánoff was delighted and surprised, but Solómin pressed his hand. Then he seated himself astride of a chair, lighted a cigar, and, leaning both his elbows on the back, he said:

"Well, tell me what the point is."

Nezhdánoff also seated himself astride of a chair, facing Solómin—but did not light a cigar.

"What is the point—you ask? . . . This—that I want to run away from here."

"That is to say—you want to leave this house! Well, what then? Go, and God be with you!"

"Not leave . . . . but run away."

"Are they detaining you? Perhaps . . you have received money in advance? In that case, you have only to say the word. . . It will give me pleasure. . . ."

"You do not understand me, my dear Solómin. . . . I said: run away—and not leave—because I am not going away from here alone."

Solómin raised his head a little.

"With whom, then?"

"Why, with that young girl whom you have seen here to-day. . . ."

"With her!—She has a fine face. Well? Have you fallen in love with each other? . . . Or is it only . . . that you have made up your minds to leave the house, where neither of you is at ease?"

"We love each other."

"Ah!"—Solómin remained silent for a space.—"Is she a relative of the master and mistress of this house?"

"Yes.—But she thoroughly shares our convictions—and is ready to go to all lengths."

Solómin smiled.

"And you, Nezhdánoff, are you ready?"

Nezhdánoff frowned slightly.

"Why that question? I will prove to you my readiness by action."

"I do not doubt you, Nezhdánoff; I only asked you because, with the exception of yourself, I suppose there is no one who is ready."

"How about Markéloff?"

"Yes! perhaps Markéloff is.—And he was born ready, I think."

At that moment some one tapped softly and swiftly at the door—and, without awaiting a response, opened it.—It was Marianna. She immediately stepped up to Solómin.

"I am convinced,"—she began,—"that you will not be surprised to see me here at this juncture.—He" (Marianna pointed to Nezhdánoff) "has, of course, told you everything.—Give me your hand—and know that you have before you an honest girl."

"Yes, I know that,"—said Solómin, gravely.—He had risen from his chair as soon as Marianna made her appearance.—"I have been looking at you at dinner, and I thought: 'What honest

eyes that young lady has.'—Nezhdánoff has, in fact, told me of your intentions. But, really, now,—why do you wish to run away?"

"How can you ask why?—The cause with which I am in sympathy . . . do not be surprised: Nezhdánoff has concealed nothing from me . . . that cause is to be begun in a few days . . . . and am I to remain in this gentleman's manor-house, where everything is—lying and deceit?—Are the people whom I love to subject themselves to danger, while I . . . ."

Solómin stopped her by a gesture of the hand.

"Do not get excited.—Sit down, and I will do likewise! Do you sit down, also, Nezhdánoff. —See here; if you have no other reason—then it is not worth while to run away from here. That affair will not begin as soon as you think.—Some prudence is required. There is no use in pushing forward at haphazard."

Marianna sat down and wrapped herself in a large plaid shawl, which she had thrown over her shoulders.

"But I cannot remain here any longer! Every one here insults me. This very day that stupid Anna Zakhárovna, in Kólya's presence, hinted at my father, and said 'the apple did not fall far from the tree'—that I was a chip of the old block! Kólya was fairly astounded, and asked what that meant.—And I say nothing about Valentína Mikhaílovna!"

Again Solómin stopped her—and this time he smiled.—Marianna understood that he was laughing at her a little, but his smile could never occasion offence to any one.

"What are you thinking of, my dear young lady? I do not know who Anna Zakhárovna is, nor of what apple you are speaking . . . . but good gracious: a stupid woman says something stupid to you, and you cannot bear it? How are you going to get along in life? The whole world is founded on stupid people. No, that is not a reason. Is there any other?"

"I am convinced,"—interposed Nezhdánoff, in a dull voice,—"that Mr. Sipyágin will turn me out of the house himself, any day now. I certainly have been denounced to him; he treats me . . in the most disdainful manner."

Solómin turned to Nezhdánoff.

"Then why should you run away, if you are going to be turned out anyhow?"

Nezhdánoff could not immediately hit upon a reply.

"I have already told you—" he began.

"He expressed himself in that way,"—put in Marianna,—"because I am going off with him."

Solómin looked at her and good-naturedly shook his head.

"Exactly, exactly, my dear young lady;—but I tell you again: if you really do wish to leave

this house because you suppose that the revolution is on the point of breaking out . . . . ."

"That is precisely why we sent for you,"—interrupted Marianna,—"for the purpose of obtaining authentic information as to the condition of affairs."

"In that case,"—went on Solómin,—"I repeat it: you may remain at home—for a good while to come.—But if you wish to run away because you love each other, and because there is no other way of becoming united to each other—then . . . ."

"Well, what then?"

"Then the only thing that remains for me to do is to wish you—as they used to say in olden times—'love and counsel'—and, if it is necessary and possible, to help you to the extent of my ability. Because, my dear young lady, I became as fond of you and of him, at first sight, as though you were my own relations."

Marianna and Nezhdánoff approached him, from right and left,—and each of them grasped one of his hands.

"Only tell us what we ought to do,"—said Marianna.—"Let us assume that the revolution is still distant . . . . but the preparatory work, the toil, which are impossible in this house, under these circumstances,—and in which we shall so gladly engage together . . . . you shall point them out to us;—only tell us where we ought

to go. . . . Send us!—You will send us, will you not?"

"Whither?"

"To the people. . . . Whither should we go, if not to the people?"

"'To the forest'"—thought Nezhdánoff. . . . Pákhlin's words recurred to his mind.

Solómin gazed intently at Marianna.

"Do you wish to learn to know the people?"

"Yes—that is to say—we do not wish merely to learn to know the people;—but to act, as well . . . . to labor for them."

"Good; I promise you that you shall learn to know them. I will procure an opportunity to act—and to labour for them.—And you, Nezhdánoff, are you ready . . . . to go after her . . . . and to them?"

"Of course I am ready,"—he articulated hastily.—"Juggernaut"—another word of Pákhlin's recurred to his mind.—"Here it comes rolling on, a huge chariot . . . . and I hear the creaking and the rumbling of its wheels. . . ."

"Good,"—repeated Solómin, thoughtfully.—"But when do you intend to flee?"

"We might do it to-morrow," exclaimed Marianna.

"Good. But whither?"

"Sssssh . . . speak lower . . ." whispered Nezhdánoff.—"Some one is walking along the corridor."

All remained silent for a while.

"Whither do you intend to flee?"—asked Solómin again, lowering his voice.

"We do not know,"—replied Marianna.

Solómin transferred his eyes to Nezhdánoff. The latter merely shook his head in negation.

Solómin stretched out his hand and cautiously snuffed the candle.

"See here, now, my children,"—he said at last. —"Come to me at the factory.—It is fine there . . . and free from danger. I will hide you. I have a little room there. No one will find you.—If only once you get there—we will not surrender you. You may say that there are many people in a factory. That 's the very thing that is good about it. Where there are plenty of people—it is possible to hide one's self.—Is it a bargain?"

"All we can do is to thank you,"—said Nezhdánoff; and Marianna, who had been disconcerted at first at the idea of the factory, added with animation:—"Of course! of course! How kind you are! But, surely, you will not detain us long there? You will send us forth?"

"That will depend on yourselves. . . . And, in case you should take it into your heads to unite in matrimony, you will find it convenient with me at the factory in that respect also. There is a neighbour of mine, hard by,—he is my first cousin,—who is a priest, by the name of Zosíma, an

extremely obliging man. He will marry you in a jiffy."

Marianna smiled to herself, and Nezhdánoff pressed Solómin's hand once more, and, after a brief pause, inquired:

"But tell me: will not the owner of your factory make a row? Will he not make things unpleasant for you?"

Solómin cast a sidelong glance at Nezhdánoff.

"Don't you worry about me.—It is quite unnecessary. If only the factory runs as it should, —it 's all one to him. And you and your dear young lady will suffer no unpleasantness at his hands. Only give me notice beforehand at what time I am to expect you."

Nezhdánoff and Marianna exchanged glances.

"Day after to-morrow, early in the morning, or the day after that,—" said Nezhdánoff, at last. "We cannot delay any longer. Probably I shall be turned out of the house to-morrow."

"Well . . . ." remarked Solómin—and rose from his chair.—"I shall look for you every morning. And I will not leave the house for a whole week. All measures shall be taken in proper fashion."

Marianna stepped up to him . . . . (she had started for the door).—"Farewell, dear, kind Vasíly Feodótitch. . . . That is your name, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Farewell . . . or no; until we meet again! And thank you, thank you!"

"Farewell. . . . Good night, my dear little dove!"

"And farewell to you, also, Nezhdánoff! until to-morrow . . . ." she added.

Marianna quickly left the room.

Both young men remained for some time motionless—and both held their peace.

"Nezhdánoff,"—began Solómin, at last,—and then relapsed into silence.—"Nezhdánoff,"—he began again,—"tell me about that young girl . . . . whatever you can tell. What has her life been hitherto? . . . Who is she? . . . why is she here?"

Nezhdánoff in a few words communicated to Solómin what he knew.

"Nezhdánoff, . . . ." he said at last, . . . "you ought to treasure that young girl. Because . . . . if . . . anything . . . . you will be committing a great sin. Farewell."

He retired, and Nezhdánoff stood for a little while in the middle of the room and whispered: "Akh! it is better not to think!" then flung himself face downward on his bed.

But Marianna, on regaining her chamber, found on a small table a little note, which ran as follows:

"I am sorry for you. You are ruining yourself. Come to your senses. Into what gulf are

you hurling yourself, with your eyes wide open? for whom, and for what?—V."

There was a peculiar fresh and delicate scent in the room; evidently, Valentína Mikhaílovna had only just left it.—Marianna took her pen, and having scrawled beneath—"Do not pity me. God knows which of us is the more worthy of pity; I only know that I would not like to be in your place. M."—left the note on the table. She did not doubt that her reply would fall into the hands of Valentína Mikhaílovna.

And on the following morning, Solómin, after having had an interview with Nezhdánoff, and definitively refused the managership of the Sipyágin factory, went home.—All the way thither he was engrossed in thought, a thing which rarely happened with him; the swaying of the carriage generally induced in him a slight drowsiness. He thought of Marianna, and also of Nezhdánoff; it seemed to him that had *he* been in love, he, Solómin,—he would have worn a different aspect, would have talked and looked differently. —"But," he thought to himself, "as that has never happened to me, I do not know what sort of a mien I should wear under those circumstances."—He called to mind an Irish girl whom he had seen once in a shop behind the counter; he remembered what magnificent, almost black hair she had, and blue eyes, and thick eyelashes, —and how inquiringly and sadly she had gazed

at him, and how he had walked up and down in the street for a long time afterward, in front of her windows, and how agitated he had been, and how he had asked himself: ought he to make her acquaintance or not? He was then passing through London; his patron had sent him thither to make some purchases, and had given him money.—Solómin had come near remaining in London, he had come near sending back that money to his patron; so potent was the impression produced on him by the beautiful Polly. . . (He had found out her name; one of her companions had called her by it.)—Nevertheless, he had controlled himself—and had returned to his patron. Polly was handsomer than Marianna; but the latter had the same inquiring and mournful gaze . . . and she was a Russian. . . .

"But what am I about?"—said Solómin in an undertone:—"bothering myself about strangers!"—and shook the collar of his cloak as though in the endeavour to cast from him all superfluous thoughts. In due time he drove up to his factory, and on the threshold of his little wing appeared the figure of his faithful Pável.

## XXVI

SOLÓMIN'S refusal greatly offended Sipyágin; he even went so far as suddenly to discover that the home-grown Stephenson was not such a remarkable mechanician, after all, and that he was not attitudinising, but putting on airs, like a genuine plebeian.—"All these Russians, when they fancy that they know something—are beneath criticism!—*Au fond*, Kallomyeítzeff is right." Under the influence of such unpleasant and irritating emotions, the statesman—*en herbe*—cast still more unsympathetic and distant glances at Nezhdánoff; he informed Kólya that he need not do any lessons that day with his tutor, that he must accustom himself to independence. . . . But he did not discharge the tutor, as the latter expected. He continued to ignore him! On the other hand, Valentína Mikhaílovna did not ignore Marianna.—A frightful scene took place between them.

A couple of hours before dinner they rather suddenly found themselves alone together in the drawing-room. Each of them instantly felt that the minute of the inevitable collision had arrived, and therefore, after a momentary hesitation, they quietly approached each other. Valentína

Mikhaílovna wore a slight smile; Marianna shut her lips tight; both were pale. As she advanced across the room, Valentína Mikhaílovna glanced to right and left, plucked a geranium-leaf. . . . Marianna's eyes were fastened straight on the smiling face which was coming toward her.

Madame Sipyágin halted first, and tapped the back of a chair with her finger-tips.

"Marianna Vikéntievna,"—she began, in a careless voice,—"we appear to be in correspondence with each other. . . . As we live under the same roof, this is rather odd, and, as you know, I am not fond of oddities."

"It was not I who began the correspondence, Valentína Mikhaílovna."

"Yes . . . . you are right. I am guilty of the oddity on this occasion. Only, I could find no other means to arouse in you the sentiment . . . . how shall I say it? . . . the sentiment . . . ."

"Say it straight out, Valentína Mikhaílovna; do not stand on ceremony,—do not be afraid of offending me."

"The sentiment . . . . of propriety."

Valentína Mikhaílovna relapsed into silence; the light tapping of her fingers on the back of the chair was the only sound audible in the room.

"In what manner do you think that I have failed to observe propriety?"—asked Marianna.

Valentína Mikhaílovna shrugged her shoulders.

"*Ma chère, vous n'êtes plus un enfant*—and you understand me perfectly well. Can you possibly suppose that your behaviour is not known to me, to Anna Zakhárovna, to the whole household, in short? Moreover, you have not taken any great pains to keep it a secret. You have, simply, defied us. . . . Boris Andréitch is, possibly, the only person who has not paid any heed to it. . . He is occupied with other more interesting and important matters. But, with that exception, your conduct is known to every one, to every one!"

Marianna grew paler and paler.

"I should like to ask you, Valentína Mikhaílovna, to express yourself more definitely.—With what, in particular, are you dissatisfied?"

"*L'insolente!*"—thought Madame Sipyágin—but she maintained her self-control.

"You wish to know with what I am dissatisfied, Marianna?—Very well, then!—I am displeased with your prolonged trysts with a young man, who, by birth and education, and social position, stands too far beneath you; I am displeased . . . . no! that word is not sufficiently strong—I am revolted by your late . . . . by your nocturnal visits to that man.—And where? Under my roof! Do you think that that is as it should be, and that I am bound to hold my peace—and, as it were, lend my countenance to your recklessness?—As an honest woman . . . *Oui, made-*

*moiselle, je l'ai été, je le suis et le serai toujours!* —I cannot but feel indignant!"

Valentína Mikhaílovna flung herself into an arm-chair, as though crushed by the weight of that indignation.

Marianna smiled, for the first time.

"I do not doubt your honesty, past, present, and future,"—she began;—"and I say it with entire sincerity. . But you have no cause to be indignant, to be angry. I have brought no dishonour on your roof. The young man to whom you refer . . . yes, I really have come to love him. . . ."

"You have fallen in love with that M'sieu Nezhdánoff?"

"I love him."

Valentína Mikhaílovna sat up straight in her chair.

"But, for mercy's sake, Marianna! why, he is a student, without birth or race;—why, he is younger than you!"—(Not without malicious joy did she utter these last words.)—"What can possibly come of this?—And what have you, with your brain, found in him? He is simply an empty-pated boy."

"You have not always thought of him in that light, Valentína Mikhaílovna."

"Oh, my God! leave me out of the question, my dear. . . . *Pas tant d'esprit que ça, je vous prie.* The question is of you, of your future.

Reflect! What sort of a match is he for you?"

"I must confess to you, Valentína Mikhaílovna, that I had not thought about the match."

"What? What do you say? How am I to understand you? You have followed the dictates of your heart, let us assume. . . . But, of course, this must end in marriage?"

"I do not know. . . . I have not thought about that."

"You have not thought about that?—But you have gone out of your mind!"—Marianna turned slightly aside.

"Let us put an end to this conversation, Valentína Mikhaílovna. It can lead to nothing. We shall not understand each other, in any case."

Valentína Mikhaílovna rose abruptly.

"I cannot, I must not put an end to this conversation! It is too important. . . I am responsible for you before . . . ." Valentína Mikhaílovna meant to say "before God!" but faltered, and said: "before the whole world!—I cannot hold my peace, when I hear such mad ravings! And why cannot I understand you? What intolerable pride all these young people have! Yes . . . . I understand you very well; I understand that you have steeped yourself in those new ideas which will, inevitably, lead you to destruction! But then it will be too late."

"Perhaps so; but believe me: even when we are

—perishing, we shall not stretch out a finger to you, that you may save us!"

"Again that pride, that frightful pride! Come, listen, Marianna, listen to me,"—she added, suddenly changing her tone. . . She made a movement to draw Marianna to her, but the latter drew back.—"*Écoutez-moi, je vous en conjure!*—For, after all, I am not so old—I am not so stupid that it is impossible to come into harmony with me!—*Je ne suis pas une encroutée.* In my youth I was even regarded as a republican . . . quite equal to you!—Listen: I will not dissemble; I have never cherished any maternal tenderness for you;—and it is not in your character to regret that. . . . But I have known, I know, that I have obligations toward you—and I have always endeavoured to fulfil them. Perhaps the good match, of which I dreamed for you—and to effect which Borís Andréitch and I would not have shrunk from any sacrifices . . . . that match has not corresponded, in all respects, to your ideals. . . . But, at the bottom of my heart. . . ."

Marianna glanced at Valentína Mikhaílovna, at those magnificent eyes, at those rosy, slightly-painted lips, at those white hands, at the slightly-outspread fingers adorned with rings, which the elegant lady so expressively pressed to the corsage of her silken gown. . . and suddenly interrupted her:

"A good match, you say, Valentína Mikhaílovna? Do you call that soulless, vulgar friend of yours, Mr. Kallomyeítzeff, 'a good match'?"

Valentína Mikhaílovna removed her fingers from her corsage.

"Yes, Marianna Vikéntievna! I am speaking of Mr. Kallomyeítzeff—of that cultured, splendid young man, who certainly will make his wife happy—and whom only a madwoman could refuse! Only a madwoman!"

"What am I to do, *ma tante!* Evidently that is what I am!"

"But, seriously, now—what fault hast thou to find with him?"

"Oh, none whatever!—I despise him . . . that is all."

Valentína Mikhaílovna shook her head impatiently from side to side.

"Let us drop him. *Retournons à nos moutons.* —And so thou art in love with Mr. Nezhdánoff?"

"Yes."

"And intend to continue . . . . thy meetings with him?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, and what if I forbid thee to do so?"

"I shall not obey you."

Valentína Mikhaílovna bounced in her chair.

"Ah! you will not obey! So that 's how the land lies!—And the person who says it to me

is the young girl whom I have loaded with favours, whom I have sheltered in my own house, she who says it to me . . . she who says it to me. . . ."

"Is the daughter of a disgraced father," gloomily interpolated Marianna.—"Go on, do not stand on ceremony!"

"*Ce n'est pas moi qui vous le fait dire, mademoiselle!*—But, in any case, there is nothing to be proud of in *that.* A young girl who eats my bread . . . ."

"Do not throw your bread in my face, Valentína Mikhaílovna!—It would have cost you more to hire a Frenchwoman for Kólya. . . . For I give him lessons in the French language!"

Valentína Mikhaílovna slightly raised her hand, in which she held a batiste handkerchief, scented with Ilang-Ilang, and with a huge white monogram in one corner,—and tried to say something;—but Marianna went on, impetuously:

"You would be in the right, a thousandfold in the right, if, instead of all that which you are now enumerating, instead of all those imaginary benefits and sacrifices, you were in a position to say: 'the young girl whom I have loved. . . .' But you are so honest that you cannot tell such a lie as *that!*" Marianna was shaking as though in a fever.—"You have always hated me.—Even now, in the depths of your heart, to which you just now alluded, you are glad,—yes, glad, that

I am thus justifying your constant prophecies, that I am covering myself with a scandal, with disgrace—and the only thing that is disagreeable to you is that a portion of that disgrace must needs fall upon your aristocratic, *honest* house."

"You are insulting me,"—whispered Valentína Mikhaílovna:—"please leave the room!"

But Marianna could no longer control herself.

"Your house, you said, your whole house, and Anna Zakhárovna, and everybody knows about my conduct!—And all are horrified, and indignant. . . . But do I ask anything of you, of them, of all those people? Can I value their opinion? Is not that bread of yours bitter? What poverty would not I prefer to this wealth? Is there not between your household and me a whole abyss which nothing—nothing can bridge over? Do not you—you, also, are a clever woman—do not you recognise that fact? And if *you* cherish toward me a feeling of hatred, cannot you understand the feeling which I cherish toward you, and to which I do not give a name, simply because it is too plain?"

"*Sortez, sortez vous dis-je* . . . ." repeated Valentína Mikhaílovna, and stamped her pretty, slender little foot.

Marianna walked in the direction of the door.

"I shall immediately relieve you from my presence; but do you know one thing, Valentína

Mikhaílovna? They say that even Rachel, in 'Bajazet,' did not make a success of that '*sortez!*'—much less you! And one thing more: what was it you said . . . . '*Je suis une honnête femme, je l'ai été, et le serai toujours*'?—Just imagine! I am persuaded that I am far more honest than you are! Farewell!"

Marianna hastily left the room, and Valentína Mikhaílovna sprang up from her chair, made an effort to scream, tried to cry. . . But what to scream—she did not know; and the tears did not obey her.

She confined herself to fanning herself with her handkerchief; but the scent which it disseminated acted still more powerfully on her nerves. . . . She felt that she was unhappy, insulted. . . . She recognised that there was a certain amount of truth in what she had just heard. But how could any one judge her so unjustly? "Can it be that I am such a wicked person?" she thought, and surveyed herself in the mirror which was directly opposite her, between two windows. The mirror reflected a charming, somewhat distorted visage overspread with red patches but still enchanting, magnificent, soft, velvety eyes. . . . "I? Am I wicked?"—she thought again, . . . . "with such eyes?"

But at that moment her husband entered—and again she covered her face with her handkerchief.

"What is the matter with thee?"—he inquired anxiously.—"What is the matter with thee, Válya?" (He had invented for her that pet name, which, however, he only permitted himself to use when they were entirely tête-à-tête, and chiefly in the country.)

At first she refused to tell him, asserted that there was nothing the matter with her . . . but ended by turning round very prettily and touchingly in her chair, throwing her arms on his shoulders—(he was bending over her)—hiding her face in the opening of his vest—and telling him everything; without any subtlety, and without any mental reservation she endeavoured—if not to excuse, at least, in some degree, to exculpate Marianna; she threw the entire blame on her youth, her passionate temperament, the defects of her early education; also, to a certain degree—and also without mental reservation, she blamed herself. "That would not have happened with my daughter!—I would have looked after her in a different manner!" Sipyágin heard her out to the very end, graciously, sympathetically—and severely; he kept his body bent until she removed her hands from his shoulders, and took away her head;—he called her an angel, he kissed her on the brow, he declared that he knew now what manner of action his rôle—the rôle of master of the house—prescribed to him—and withdrew, as a humane but energetic

man withdraws who is preparing to fulfil some unpleasant, but indispensable duty. . . .

At eight o'clock, after dinner, Nezhdánoff, as he sat in his chamber, was writing to his friend Sílin.

"Friend Vladímir, I write to thee at the moment of a decisive change in my existence. I have been turned out of this house, I am going away from here. But that would be nothing. . . . I am not going away alone. The young girl of whom I have written to thee is to accompany me. Everything unites us: the similarity of our life-fates, identity of convictions, aspirations, reciprocity of sentiment, in short. We love each other: at least, I am convinced that I am not capable of experiencing the sentiment of love in any other form than that under which it now presents itself to me. But I should be telling thee a lie, if I were to say that I do not experience a secret terror, or even a sort of strange sinking at the heart. . . . . Everything is dark ahead—and we are dashing headlong into that darkness together. I need not explain to thee what we are setting out to do and what sort of activity we have chosen. Marianna and I are not seeking happiness; we do not desire to enjoy ourselves,—but to struggle together, side by side, lending each other support. Our goal is clear to us; but what paths lead to it—we do not know. Shall we find, if not sympathy, at least the possibility of action?—Marianna is a splendid, honest girl: if we are fated to perish, I shall not reproach myself for having led her astray, because there was no other life for her. But Vladímir, Vladímir! my heart is heavy. . . . Doubt tortures me, not as to my feeling toward her,

of course, but . . . . I know not!—Only, now it is too late to turn back. Reach out thy hands to us from afar —and wish us patience, the strength for self-sacrifice, and love . . . more love. And thou, the Russian people, which art unknown by us, but art beloved by us, with all the strength of our being, with our whole heart's blood, receive us—without too much indifference—and teach us what we must expect from thee!

"Farewell, Vladímir, farewell."

Having written these few lines, Nezhdánoff betook himself to the village.—On the following night, just as the dawn was beginning to break, he was already standing on the edge of the birch-grove, not far from Sipyágin's garden. A little behind him a peasant-cart, drawn by a pair of unbridled horses, was barely visible through the tangled foliage of a wide-spreading hazel-bush; in the cart, on the network of rope, an old, grey-headed peasant was fast asleep, lying on a truss of hay, and with a patched overcoat drawn over his head. Nezhdánoff was gazing fixedly at the road, at the clump of willows along the garden; the grey, tranquil night still lay round about, the little stars twinkled in rivalry with one another, stuck in the empty depths of the sky. Along the rounded lower edges of the long array of clouds, a pale glow was creeping from the east, and thence, also, breathed the first chill of early morning. All of a sudden, Nezhdánoff started, and grew alert; somewhere, near at hand,

a wicket-gate first squeaked, then banged; a small feminine form, enveloped in a kerchief, with a small bundle in her bare hand, emerged, without haste, from the motionless shadow of the willows, upon the soft dust of the highway—and, crossing it obliquely, as though on tiptoe, directed her steps toward the grove. Nezhdánoff darted to meet her.

"Marianna?"—he whispered.

"It is I!"—the quiet response made itself heard from beneath the pendent kerchief.

"Come this way, follow me,"—replied Nezhdánoff, involuntarily grasping her bare hand with the bundle.

She shivered, as though she felt the chill.—He led her to the cart, and roused the peasant.—The latter sprang up alertly, immediately clambered to the box, thrust his arms into the sleeves of the coat, seized the rope reins. . . The horses started; he cautiously soothed them with a voice that was hoarse from his sound sleep. Nezhdánoff seated Marianna on the network of the cart, first spreading his plaid upon it; he wrapped her feet in a coverlet,—the hay lay on the bottom in heaps,—seated himself by her side,—and, bending over to the peasant, said softly: "Drive on, thou knowest whither."—The peasant jerked the reins, the horses emerged from the border of the grove, snorting and shrinking;—and the cart rolled along the highway, jolting and rattling

its narrow, aged wheels. Nezhdánoff kept one arm around Marianna's waist; she raised her kerchief a little, with her cold fingers,—and turning her face toward him and smiling, she said:

"How splendidly fresh the air is, Alyósha!"

"Yes,"—replied the little peasant,—"there is a heavy dew."

The dew was so heavy that the boxes of the cart-wheels, as they scraped the tops of the tall blades of grass by the roadside, shook from them whole clusters of the finest water-dust, and the green of the grass appeared to be of a bluish-grey.

Again Marianna shivered with the cold.

"It is chilly, chilly,"—she repeated in a merry voice.—"And freedom, Alyósha, freedom!"

## XXVII

Solómin rushed out to the factory-gate as soon as his messengers ran to tell him that a gentleman and a lady had arrived in a peasant-cart, and were inquiring for him.—Not greeting his visitors, but merely nodding at them several times, he immediately gave orders to the peasant coachman to drive into the yard.—And, guiding him straight to his own wing, he helped Marianna out of the cart. Nezhdánoff sprang out after her. Solómin led them both through a long, dark, narrow corridor, and up a narrow, crooked staircase, to the rear part of the wing,—to the second story. There he opened a low door, and all three entered a small, but fairly clean, room with two windows.

"Welcome!"—said Solómin, with his habitual smile, which, on this occasion, seemed more expansive and radiant than usual.

"Here are your quarters.—This room, and yonder, alongside, another.—Not showy, but never mind that: you can live in them. And there is no one to stare at you here. Yonder, under your windows—so the proprietor asserts—there is a flower-garden,—but, in my opinion, it is a

vegetable-garden; it runs to the wall, and on the right and left are fences. . It is a quiet little place!—Well, good morning once more! my dear young lady,—and you, Nezhdánoff, good morning!"

He shook them both by the hand.—They stood motionless, did not take off their things—and with taciturn, half-astonished, half-joyful agitation, each of them stared straight in front of him.

"Well, what 's the matter with you?" began Solómin again.—"Remove your vestments!—What things have you with you?"

Marianna pointed to the bundle which she still held in her hand.

"This is all I have."

"And my travelling-bag and a sack are in the cart.—Here now, I 'll get them directly. . . ."

"Stop, stop!"—Solómin opened the door.—"Pável!"—he shouted into the gloom of the staircase—"run, brother . . . there are some things yonder in the cart . . . . bring them here."

"Immediately,"—rang out the voice of the omnipresent Pável.

Solómin turned to Marianna, who had thrown off her kerchief, and had begun to unhook her mantle.

"And did everything go off successfully?"—he asked.

"Yes . . . no one saw us.—I left a letter for Mr. Sipyágin.—I brought no clothes with me, Vasíly Feodótitch, because you are going to send us. . . ." (For some reason, Marianna could not bring herself to add: "to the people.")—"At any rate, it makes no difference; they would not have been suitable. I have money, wherewith to buy what is necessary."

"We will settle all that later on . . . and now,"—said Solómin, pointing at Pável, who was just entering with Nezhdánoff's things—"let me introduce to you my best friend in this place; you can rely upon him thoroughly . . . as though he were myself.—Didst thou speak to Tatyána about the samovár?"—he added, in an undertone.

"It will be here immediately," replied Pável; "and the cream, and everything.—Tatyána is his wife,"—went on Solómin—"and as trustworthy as he is.—Until you . . . well, until you get used to this place,—she will serve you, my dear young lady."

Marianna threw her mantle on a leather-covered couch, which stood in one corner.—"Call me Marianna, Vasíly Feodótitch—I do not wish to be a young lady. . And I want no servant. . . . I did not leave . . . that house with the idea of having a servant. Do not look at my gown; I had no other. I must change all that."

The gown, of light-brown ladies' cloth, was

very simple; but, having been made by a Petersburg dressmaker, it fitted Marianna's waist and shoulders beautifully, and had a stylish aspect in general.

"Well, not a servant—but a 'help,' in American fashion.—But you will drink tea, of course. It is still early, but you must both be fatigued. I am going off now on the business of the factory;—we shall meet again later.—Tell Pável or Tatyána whatever you require."

Marianna quickly offered him both her hands.

"How shall we thank you, Vasíly Feodótitch?"—She gazed at him with emotion.

Solómin gently stroked one of her hands.—"I might say to you: 'it is not worth gratitude,' . . . . but that would be untrue. I had better say to you, that your gratitude affords me great pleasure.—So we are quits. Farewell for the present! Come along, Pável!"

Marianna and Nezhdánoff were left alone.

She flew to him; and gazing at him with the same look as she had at Solómin, only still more joyously, with still more emotion, and more brilliantly,—"Oh, my dear," she said to him,—"we are beginning a new life. . . . At last! at last! Thou canst not believe how lovely and dear these poor quarters, in which we are fated to remain only a few days in all, appear to me, in comparison with that hateful mansion! Tell me, art thou glad?"

Nezhdánoff took her hands and clasped them to his breast.

"I am happy, Marianna, that I am beginning this new life in company with thee!—Thou shalt be my guiding star, my support, my courage. . ."

"Dear Alyósha! But stay—I must clean up a little, and put my toilet in order.—I will go to my room . . . . and thou—wilt remain here.—I will be back in a minute. . . ."

Marianna went into the other room, locked the door—and, a moment later, opening the door half-way, she thrust in her head, and said:—"What a splendid fellow Solómin is!"—Then she locked herself in again—and the click of the key was audible.

Nezhdánoff went to the window, and looked out into the garden . . . . one aged, very aged apple-tree attracted his particular attention, for some reason or other. He shook himself, stretched, opened his travelling-bag—and took nothing out of it; he had fallen into thought.

A quarter of an hour later, Marianna returned with a vivacious, freshly-washed face, all merry and mobile; and a few minutes later, Pável's wife, Tatyána, made her appearance with the samovár, the tea-things, rolls, and cream.

In contrast to her gipsy-featured husband, she was a genuine Russian woman, stout, ruddy-haired, with uncovered head, with a thick plait of hair firmly wound around a horn comb, with

large but pleasant features, and very kind grey eyes. She was dressed in a neat though faded gown of cotton print;—her hands were clean and handsome, although large. She bowed composedly, said, with a firm, distinct enunciation, without any drawl whatever, "Good morning," —and began to place the samovár, the cups, and so forth.

Marianna stepped up to her.

"Allow me, Tatyána; I will help you.—Just give me a napkin."

"Never mind, my lady, we have become used to this.—Vasíly Feodótitch said: 'If anything is wanted, please to give your orders, we will get you everything with great pleasure.'"

"Tatyána, please do not call me 'my lady.' . . . I am dressed like the gentry,—but I . . . I entirely. . . . ."

The intent gaze of Tatyána's keen eyes discomfited Marianna.

"And who are you?"—asked Tatyána, in her even tones.

"If you like . . . . I, really . . . . I am a noble; only, I want to abandon all that—and become like all . . . . like all simple women."

"Ah, so that 's what 's the matter! Well, now I know. You are one of those who wish to simplify themselves.—There are a lot of them, just now."

"What was that you said, Tatyána? Simplify themselves?"

"Yes . . . that 's the word that has come into use among us now. To be in accord with the simple people, that is to say. To simplify themselves.—Well, what of it? It 's a good cause, to teach the people common sense.—Only, is n't it a difficult matter? Oï, dif-ficult?—God grant success!"

"Simplify themselves!"—repeated Marianna.—"Dost thou hear, Alyósha, thou and I are now simplified persons!"

Nezhdánoff laughed, and even repeated:

"Simplify themselves! Simplified persons!"

"And who 's that with you—your little husband,—or your brother?"—asked Tatyána, cautiously rinsing the cups with her large, expert hands, and glancing at Nezhdánoff and Marianna in turn, with a caressing smile.

"No,"—replied Marianna;—"he is neither my husband nor my brother."

Tatyána raised her head.

"So you are living by free grace?—That often happens also—nowadays.—In former times, it used to be more common among the sectarians,[1]—but nowadays, other people practise it also. It 's all right, if only God blesses—and they live

[1] The *raskólniki;* the descendants of those who, like their ancestors in the reign of Alexyéi Mikhaílovitch, refuse to recognise the revised Scriptures and Church books. Naturally, in course of time, they lost their priesthood, and those who constitute the "priestless" branch are obliged to dispense with rites which are dependent, in Russian law, on the priestly intervention. One branch managed to secure priests in a roundabout way.—TRANSLATOR.

in concord!—Then a priest is not necessary. There are some of that sort here in our factory. They are not among the worst, either."

"What nice words you have, Tatyána! . . . . 'by free grace.' . . . That pleases me very much.—See here, Tatyána, I have a favour to ask of you.—I must make or buy myself a gown, like that one of yours, or even more simple still.—And shoes, and stockings, and a kerchief for my head.—I want everything just as you have it.—I have plenty of money for that."

"Certainly, my lady, all that is possible. . . . Well, I won't do it again, please don't be angry. —I will not call you 'my lady.' Only, what am I to call you?"

"Marianna."

"And by what patronymic am I to call you?"

"Why, what do you want with my father's name? Call me simply Marianna. You see, I call you Tatyána."

"It 's the same—and not the same. You had better tell me."

"Very well, then. My father's name was Vikéntiy.—And what was your father's name?"

"Mine was—Osíp."

"Well, then I shall call you Tatyána Osípovna."[1]

[1] It is not customary to add the patronymic in addressing persons of the lower class.—TRANSLATOR.

"And I shall call you Marianna Vikéntievna. So that will be splendid!"

"Won't you drink a cup of tea with us, Tatyána Osípovna?"

"I will, seeing this is the first time, Marianna Vikéntievna. I will indulge myself with a cup. And then Egóritch will scold."

"Who is Egóritch?"

"Pável, my husband."

"Sit down, Tatyána Osípovna."

"And so I will, Marianna Vikéntievna."

Tatyána squatted down on a chair, and began to drink tea, nibbling at her sugar, incessantly turning the lump round in her fingers, and screwing up her eyes on the side on which she took a bite of the sugar. Marianna entered into conversation with her. Tatyána replied without ceremony, and herself questioned and narrated in turn. She almost worshipped Solómin, and ranked her husband directly after Vasíly Feodótitch. But the factory life weighed upon her.

"'T is neither the town nor the country here. . . . I would n't stay an hour, if it was n't for Vasíly Feodótitch!"

Marianna lent an attentive ear to her stories. Nezhdánoff, seating himself on one side, watched his friend, and was not surprised at her attention: all this was new to Marianna—but it seemed to him that he had seen whole hundreds just like

Tatyána—and had talked with them hundreds of times.

"See here, Tatyána Osípovna,"—said Marianna at last;—"you think that we wish to teach the people;—no—we wish to serve them."

"Serve them how? Teach them; there 's service for you. I 'll just take myself as an example. When I married Egóritch, I did not know how either to read or to write; but now I know, thanks to Vasíly Feodótitch. He did not teach me himself—but he paid an old man to do it. That man taught me.—For I was still young, although I was grown up."

Marianna remained silent for a while.

"I should like, Tatyána Osípovna,"—she began again,—"to learn some handicraft . . . . you and I will talk that over hereafter.—I sew badly; if I were to learn to cook, I could go out as a cook."

Tatyána meditated.

"What do you mean by going out as a cook? —Rich people, merchants, have women cooks; but the poor do their own cooking.—And to cook for a working-man's guild, for labourers. . . . Well, that 's the very lowest thing!"

"But I should like to live with a rich man, but know the poor. Otherwise, how am I to come in contact with them?—It is not every day that such opportunities as this occur."

Tatyána turned her empty cup upside down in her saucer.[1]

"It is a difficult matter," she said at last, with a sigh.—"I will show you all I know,—but I do not know much myself. You must talk it over with Egóritch. Such a man as he is! He reads all sorts of little books!—and he can set things straight as easy as turn over his hand."—Here she glanced at Marianna, who was rolling a cigarette. . . . "And here 's another thing, Marianna Vikéntievna: excuse me; but if you really want to simplify yourself—you 'll have to drop that."—She pointed at the cigarette.—"For in these callings, even in that of a cook, it is n't permitted:—and everybody would recognise you instantly for a lady.—Yes."

Marianna flung her cigarette out of the window.

"I will not smoke; . . . it is easy to break myself of the habit.—Simple women do not smoke; consequently, I ought not to smoke."

"You have spoken truly, Marianna Vikéntievna.—The masculine sex indulge themselves with that among us, also;—but not the feminine sex. That 's so! . . . . Ekh! and here 's Vasíly Feodótitch himself coming hither. Those are his footsteps. Do you ask him; he will settle everything at once—in the best manner."

[1] In peasant circles, this indicates that the person positively will not be prevailed upon to drink any more.—TRANSLATOR.

And, in fact, Solómin's voice resounded outside the door.

"May I come in?"

"Come in, come in,"—cried Marianna.

"That is one of my English habits,"[1]—said Solómin, as he entered. "Well, how do you feel? You have n't been bored yet?—I see that you are drinking tea with Tatyána.—Do you heed her advice; she 's a sensible woman. . . But my proprietor is coming to see me to-day . . . it is very inopportune! And he will stay to dinner.—What can I do? He has the right to dictate on that point also."

"What sort of a man is he?"—asked Nezhdánoff, emerging from his corner.

"He 's all right. He 's no fool. One of the new men. Very polite—and wears mittens—and darts his eyes everywhere, quite equal to the old sort. He 'll skin you himself—and condemn you himself; 'Be so good as to turn on this side;—there 's still a small live spot there . . . I must take it off!'—Well, he 's silky with me; I am necessary to him! Only, I came to tell you that we are not likely to meet again to-day.—Your dinner will be brought to you. And do not show yourselves in the yard. What think you, Marianna, will the Sipyágins hunt you up, pursue you?"

[1] The genuine Russian fashion is to enter without knocking or asking permission.—TRANSLATOR.

"I do not think so,"—replied Marianna.

"And I am convinced that they will,"—said Nezhdánoff.

"Well, it makes no difference," went on Solómin;—"we must be cautious at first. Then things will blow over."

"Yes; only, see here!" remarked Nezhdánoff. "Markéloff must know my place of abode; he must be notified."

"Why?"

"It cannot be otherwise, for the sake of our cause.—He must always know where I am. I have given him my word. And he will not chatter!"

"Very well. We will send Pável."

"And will a garment be ready for me?"—asked Nezhdánoff.

"You mean a costume?—certainly . . . certainly.—A regular masquerade. Luckily, it 's cheap. Good-bye; get rested.—Come along, Tatyána."

Again Marianna and Nezhdánoff were left alone.

## XXVIII

THE first thing they did was to clasp each other's hands tightly;—then Marianna exclaimed: "Stay—I will help thee to clear up thy room"—and began to unpack some more things from the travelling-bag and the sack. Nezhdánoff made an attempt to help her; but she declared that she would do it all herself.—"For I must learn how to serve." And, in fact, she hung the garments on the nails which she found in the table-drawer, which she herself hammered into the wall with the back of a hair-brush, in default of a hammer; and laid the body-linen in the old bureau, which stood between the windows.

"What is this?"—she suddenly inquired;—"a revolver? It is loaded? What dost thou have it for?"

"It is not loaded . . . but give it here. Thou askest: 'What for?' How can we get along without a revolver in our vocation?"

She laughed, and went on with her work, shaking out each separate thing, and stroking it with her palm; she even placed a couple of pairs of shoes under the divan,—and solemnly laid out several books, a packet of paper, and the small

note-book containing the poems, on the three-legged corner table, calling it the writing- and work-table, in contrast to another, a round one, which she called the dining- and tea-table. Then grasping the poetical note-book in both hands, and raising it to a level with her face, and gazing across its edge at Nezhdánoff, she said, with a smile:

"We are going to read all of this in the time which is free from work, are we not? Hey?"

"Give me that book! I will burn it!"—cried Nezhdánoff.—"It is worthy of no other fate."

"In that case, why didst thou bring it with thee? No, no, I will not give it to thee to burn. And, moreover, they say that composers only threaten—and never burn their things. But, all the same, it will be better to carry it off with me!"

Nezhdánoff attempted to protest, but Marianna fled into the adjoining room with the book, —and returned without it.

She seated herself close to Nezhdánoff—and immediately rose again.—"Thou hast not yet been to call on me . . . in my room. Wouldst thou like to look at it?—It is quite equal to thine own. Come—I will show thee."

Nezhdánoff rose also—and followed Marianna. *Her* room, as she expressed it, was somewhat smaller than *his* room; but the furniture appeared to be cleaner and newer; on the window-

sill stood a glass vase filled with flowers, and in the corner an iron bedstead.

"Thou seest how nice he is, Solómin,"—exclaimed Marianna;—"only, I must not coddle myself too much; such quarters will not often fall to our lot.—And this is what I am thinking: it would be a good thing to manage so that we need not part, but that both of us might enter some position together!—That will be difficult," she added, after a pause.—"Well, we will think it over. It makes no difference, anyway; thou wilt not return to Petersburg?"

"What is there for me to do in Petersburg?—Attend the University—and give lessons? That is entirely inappropriate."

"Let us see what Solómin will say!"—said Marianna.—"He can decide, best of all, what to do and how to do it."

They returned to the first room and again sat down side by side. They praised Solómin, Tatyána, Pável; they mentioned Madame Sipyágin, and how their former life had suddenly retreated into the remote distance, as though it had been enveloped in a mist; then they pressed each other's hands once more—and exchanged joyful glances; then they began to discuss the question, into what spheres of society they ought to try to penetrate, and how they ought to behave, in order that suspicion might not fall upon them.

Nezhdánoff asserted that the less they thought

about that, the more simply they behaved, the better it would be.

"Of course!"—exclaimed Marianna. "For we want to simplify ourselves, as Tatyána says."

"I did not mean it in that sense,"—began Nezhdánoff. "I meant to say that it is not necessary to put constraint upon ourselves. . . ."

Marianna suddenly burst out laughing.

"It has just occurred to me, Alyósha, what I called us both: 'simplified people!'"

Nezhdánoff also laughed, and repeated: "Simplified people" . . . and then fell into thought.

And Marianna also became thoughtful.

"Alyósha!"—she said.

"What?"

"It seems to me that we are both in rather an awkward position.—Young couples—*des nouveaux mariés,*"—she explained,—"on the first day of their wedding journey ought to feel something of that sort.—They are happy . . . they feel so much at their ease—and yet rather embarrassed."

Nezhdánoff smiled—a constrained smile.

"Thou knowest very well, Marianna, that we are not a young married pair—in thy sense of the word."

Marianna rose from her seat, and stood directly in front of Nezhdánoff.

"That depends on thee."

"How so?"

"Alyósha, thou knowest, that when thou shalt tell me, as an honourable man—and I believe thee, because thou really art an honourable man;—when thou shalt tell me, that thou lovest me with love . . . well, with that love which gives a right to the life of another person,—when thou shalt tell me that—I am thine."

Nezhdánoff flushed, and turned away slightly.

"When I shall say that to thee?"

"Yes, then! But now thou seest, that thou dost not say that to me. . . . Oh, yes, Alyósha, thou really art an honourable man. Come, let us talk about more serious matters."

"But I do love thee, Marianna."

"I do not doubt it . . . . and I shall wait. Stay, I have not yet fully set thy writing-table in order; there is something wrapped up, something hard, there. . . ."

Nezhdánoff tore himself from his seat.

"Let that alone, Marianna. . . . That . . . please let it alone."

Marianna turned her head toward him, over her shoulder—and raised her eyebrows in amazement.

"Is it—a secret? A secret? Thou hast a secret?"

"Yes . . . yes,"—said Nezhdánoff,—and added, in utter confusion—by way of explanation:—"It is . . . . a portrait."

This word broke from him involuntarily. In fact, in the paper which Marianna held in her hand was wrapped her portrait which Markéloff had given to Nezhdánoff.

"A portrait?"—she articulated in a slow tone. . . . "A woman's portrait?"

She handed him the packet; but he took it awkwardly; it almost slipped out of his hands, and flew open.

"Why, it is . . . . my portrait!"—cried Marianna, with vivacity. . . . "Come—I have a right to take my own portrait."—She snatched it from Nezhdánoff.

"Didst thou draw this?"

"No . . . I did not."

"Who, then? Markéloff?"

"Thou hast guessed it. . . He did it."

"How comes it in thy possession?"

"He gave it to me."

"When?"

Nezhdánoff narrated the when and the how. While he was speaking Marianna gazed alternately at him and at the portrait . . . and one and the same idea flashed through the minds of both Nezhdánoff and herself. "If *he* were in this room, *he* would have the right to demand. . . ."

But neither Marianna nor Nezhdánoff uttered this thought aloud . . . . possibly because each of them was conscious of it in the other.

Marianna softly wrapped the portrait up in its paper—and laid it on the table.

"He is a good man!"—she whispered. . . . "Where is he now?"

"What dost thou mean by 'where'? . . . . At home, in his own house. I am going to him tomorrow or the day after for some little books and pamphlets. He meant to give them to me, but forgot them when I left."

"And thou, Alyósha—dost thou think that, in giving thee this portrait, he renounced everything . . . positively everything?"

"So it seemed to me."

"And thou expectest to find him at home?"

"Of course."

"Ah!"—Marianna dropped her eyes—dropped her hands.—"Here comes Tatyána with our dinner,"—she cried suddenly.—"What a splendid woman she is!"

Tatyána made her appearance with plates, knives and forks, napkins, and cruet-stand.—While she was setting the table she narrated what had been going on in the factory.

"The master came from Moscow by rail—and began to rush about through all the stories, like a crazy man; and he does n't understand the first thing about it; he only does it for the sake of appearances, by way of example.—And Vasíly Feodótitch treats him like a little bit of a child;—and the master wanted to set up some opposi-

'tion—so Vasíly Feodótitch immediately told him in plain terms: 'I 'll throw everything up on the spot,' says he; so he immediately stuck his tail between his legs.—Now they are eating together; and the master brought a companion with him. . . And that companion just does nothing but wonder at everything. And he must be a man with money, that companion, because he chiefly holds his tongue, and shakes his head. And he 's fat, very fat!—A Moscow big-wig! Not for nothing does the proverb say that—Moscow is the bottom of the hill for all Russia: everything rolls into her."

"What notice you take of everything!"—cried Marianna.

"I am an observing person,"—returned Tatyána.—"There, your dinner is ready. Eat, and health be yours. And I 'll sit here a bit and look at you."

Marianna and Nezhdánoff began to eat; Tatyána hitched herself on to the window-sill, and propped her cheek on her hand.

"I 'll look at you,"—she repeated . . . "and what young, delicate creatures you both are. . . It 's such a pleasure to look at you, that it 's even painful! Ekh, my dears! You are taking upon yourselves a burden beyond your strength! Such as you ought to be representatives of the Tzar—what in the world possesses you to settle down in 'chicken-coops'?"

"Never you mind, aunty, don't you scare us," —remarked Nezhdánoff.—"You know the proverb: 'Thou hast called thyself a mushroom —so crawl into the basket.'"[1]

"I know . . . . I know; but the basket has become a tight fit nowadays, and impossible to crawl out of! . . . ."

"Hast thou children?"—asked Marianna, in order to change the subject.

"Yes; a son. He has begun to go to school. I had a daughter, but she died, the darling! A misfortune happened to her; she was run over. And if she had only been killed on the spot! But she was n't—and she suffered a long time. From that time forth I have been compassionate; but before that I was a regular buckthorn—just like wood!"

"Well, and how about your Pável Egóritch—did n't you love him?"

"Ah! that 's quite another thing; that 's—a young girl's affair. And you love your man, of course? Or don't you?"

"Yes, I do."

"Do you love him very much?"

"Yes."

"Indeed. . . . ." Tatyána looked at Nezhdánoff, at Marianna,—and added nothing further.

Again Marianna was forced to change the sub-

[1] In English the proverb is equivalent to: "As you have made your bed, so you must lie upon it."—TRANSLATOR.

ject. She announced to Tatyána that she had given up smoking tobacco; the latter praised her. —Then Marianna asked her again about a dress; reminded her that she had promised to show her how to cook. . . .

"Yes, and here 's another thing: cannot I get some thick, coarse thread? I shall knit stockings . . . . common ones."

Tatyána replied that everything should be attended to in proper fashion, and having cleared the table, she left the room with her firm, calm tread.

"Well, and what shall we do now?"—Marianna appealed to Nezhdánoff;—and without giving him an opportunity to answer:—"As our real work will not begin until to-morrow, what dost thou say to devoting this evening to literature? Wilt thou?—Let us read over thy verses! I shall be a stern judge."

It was a long time before Nezhdánoff would give his consent. . . . But it ended in his yielding and beginning to read from his note-book. Marianna seated herself close by his side, and gazed into his face while he read.—She had spoken the truth; she proved to be a severe judge. A few of the poems pleased her; she preferred the purely lyrical, short ones and, as she expressed it,—the non-edifying ones. Nezhdánoff did not read at all well; he could not bring himself to declaim and would not allow himself to

fall into a dry tone; the result was—neither fish nor flesh—neither one thing nor the other. Marianna suddenly interrupted him with the question: did he know Dobroliúboff's wonderful poem which begins thus: "Let me die—'t is little sadness," [1]—and then and there recited it to him—not very well, on her part, either—in a rather childish way.

Nezhdánoff remarked that it was bitter and sorrowful to an impossible degree—and then added that he, Nezhdánoff, could not have written that poem, because he had no occasion to fear any tears over his grave.

"There will be some if I survive thee,"—articulated Marianna, slowly, and, raising her eyes to the ceiling, and pausing for a moment, she inquired, in a low tone, as though talking to herself:

[1] "Let me die—'t is little sadness;
One thing alone my pining soul affrights:
It is, lest death should play on me
Some prank insulting.

"I fear, lest o'er my body cold
Some burning tears be shed,
Lest there be some, in stupid zeal,
To bring flowers for my coffin.

"Lest after it, in throng disinterested,
My friends should march,
Lest, 'neath my mound of earth,
I come to be beloved.

"Lest all which I so ardently desired,
So vainly too while living,
Should cheerily smile at me
Over my coffin-boards."

"Works of Dobroliúboff," Vol. IV, p. 615.

"How did he draw that portrait of me? From memory?"

Nezhdánoff turned swiftly toward her. . .

"Yes; from memory."

Marianna was surprised that he answered her. It seemed to her that she had only thought that question.

"It is astonishing . . . ." she went on, in the same voice; "for he has no talent for painting. —What I meant to say . . . ." she added aloud, "was . . . yes! about Dobroliúboff's verses.— People ought to write verses like Púshkin's—or like those of Dobroliúboff:—it is not poetry . . . but is something equally good."

"And such as mine,"—inquired Nezhdánoff, —"ought not to be written?—Is n't that true?"

"Such verses as thine give pleasure to thy friends, not because they are very good—but because *thou* art a fine man—and they are like thee."

Nezhdánoff laughed.

"Thou hast buried them—and me, too, by the way."

Marianna slapped him on the hand and called him wicked. . . Soon afterward she announced that she was tired and would go to bed.

"By the way, thou knowest," she added, shaking back her short but thick curls, "I have one hundred and thirty-seven rubles—and how much hast thou?"

"Ninety-eight."

"Oh! why, we are rich . . . for simplified people.—Well—good-bye until to-morrow."

She left the room; but a few minutes later her door opened a crack—and through the narrow aperture there came a sound; at first: "Good-bye!"—then, more softly: "Good-bye!"—And the key clicked in the lock.

Nezhdánoff threw himself on the divan and covered his eyes with his hand. . . Then he rose hastily, went to the door, and knocked.

"What dost thou want?"—was audible thence.

"Not *until* to-morrow—Marianna . . . . but —to-morrow!"

"To-morrow,"—responded a tranquil voice.

## XXIX

EARLY in the morning of the following day Nezhdánoff knocked again at Marianna's door.

"It is I,"—he replied to her question: "Who is there?"—"Canst thou come out to me?"

"Wait . . . in a minute."

She came forth—and uttered an exclamation of amazement. For a moment she did not recognise him. He wore a threadbare nankeen kaftan of a yellowish hue, with tiny buttons, and a high waist; he had arranged his hair in Russian fashion—with a parting in the middle; he had wrapped his neck in a blue kerchief; in his hand he held a cap with a crooked visor; on his feet were unblacked, calfskin boots.

"Good heavens!"—cried Marianna—"how . . . homely thou art!"—and then she swiftly embraced him—and still more swiftly kissed him. —"But why hast thou dressed thyself like *this?* Thou hast the aspect of some miserable petty burgher of the town . . . . or a pedlar, or a discharged yard-porter. Why this kaftan—and not a sleeveless, hooked waistcoat, or simply a peasant armyák?"

"That 's exactly the point,"—began Nezhdá-

noff, who, in his costume, really did smack of a petty cattle-dealer, or burgher—and he himself was conscious of it, and in his soul he was both vexed and disconcerted to such a degree that he kept touching himself on the breast with the widely-spread fingers of both hands as though he were cleaning himself. . . . "In a waistcoat or an armyák I should have been recognised immediately, Pável asserts;—but this costume—according to his statements . . . . gives the impression of my never having worn any other since I was born—which is not very flattering to my vanity, I may remark in parenthesis."

"Dost thou really mean to set off at once . . . to begin?"—asked Marianna with animation.

"Yes; I shall make an effort, although . . . to tell the truth . . . ."

"Lucky man!"—interrupted Marianna.

"That Pável is a remarkable sort of fellow," —continued Nezhdánoff:—"he knows everything; he fairly bores you through and through with his eyes; and then all of a sudden he will put on such a look, as though he had no part in anything—and would meddle with nothing! He is always doing good turns—and always making game of himself.—He has brought me some books from Markéloff; he knows him, also, and calls him Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch. And he is ready to go through fire and water for Solómin."

"And so is Tatyána,"—remarked Marianna.—"Why are these people so devoted to him?"

Nezhdánoff made no reply.

"What books did Pável bring thee from Markéloff?"—asked Marianna.

"Why . . . the usual sort.—'The Story of the Four Brothers.' . . . Well, and the ordinary, familiar lot, also.—However, it is better so."

Marianna glanced about her sadly.

"What has become of Tatyána? She promised to come very early. . . ."

"Here she is, and here am I,"—said Tatyána, entering the room, with a bundle in her hand.—She had been standing in the doorway—and had heard Marianna's exclamation.

"You 'll have plenty of time . . . here 's a pretty sight!"

Marianna fairly flew to meet her.

"Have you brought it?"

Tatyána patted the bundle with her hand.

"Everything is here . . . a complete outfit. . . . . All you have to do is to put it on . . . and go and display yourself—and amaze the people!"

"Akh, come along, come along, Tatyána Osípovna, my dear. . . ."

Marianna drew her into her room.

When he was left alone, Nezhdánoff walked back and forth a couple of times, with a peculiar, lounging gait . . . (for some reason or other,

he imagined that that was the way in which petty burghers walk)—cautiously smelled of his own sleeve, of the inside of his cap—and frowned; he scanned himself in the tiny mirror fastened to the wall near the window, and shook his head: he was very far from comely.—("So much the better, however," he thought.) Then he got a few pamphlets, thrust them into his back pocket—and uttered in an undertone: "Shtosh . . . robyáta . . . . iéfto . . . nitchavó . . . potomú-shtsha. . ."[1]—"I think that sounds like the real thing," he thought again; "but what need is there for acting! my costume is my guarantee." And at this point Nezhdánoff recalled an exiled German who had been obliged to flee clear across Russia—and who spoke Russian badly; but, thanks to his merchant's cap with a catskin border, which he had bought in a rural town—he was everywhere taken for a merchant—and he safely regained his own country.

At that moment Solómin entered.

"Aha!" he exclaimed; "thou hast equipped thyself!—Excuse me, brother; in this garb, I cannot address thee as 'you.'"

"Why, do me . . . do thou me the favour—I wanted to ask it of thee, anyway."

[1] They should be pronounced, respectively: *tchto* (what) . . . *rebyáta* (lads) . . . . *éto* (this) . . . . *nitchevó* (nothing) . . . *potomútchto* (because). The point is the pronunciation, as the meaning of all these words varies more or less, according to the context.—TRANSLATOR.

"Only, it 's awfully early; but perhaps thou wishest to become accustomed.—Well, then, it 's all right. Nevertheless, thou must wait: the proprietor has not yet taken his departure. He is asleep."

"I will go out later,"—replied Nezhdánoff. "I will stroll about the neighbourhood until I receive some orders."

"That 's right! Only, see here, brother Alexyéi . . . . I say that right, don't I; Alexyéi?"

"Yes, Alexyéi.—If thou wilt, *Lixyéi*,"—added Nezhdánoff, laughing.

"No; why exaggerate.—Listen: good counsel is better than money.—I see that thou hast some little books; distribute them to whomsoever thou wilt—only not in the factory—no—no!"

"Why not?"

"Because, in the first place, it is dangerous for thee;—in the second place, I have pledged my word to the proprietor that nothing of that sort shall be done here; for the factory belongs to him, after all; in the third place, we have made some beginnings—there are schools, and so forth. . . . Well—thou mightest make mischief. Act at thine own risk, as thou seest fit,—I shall not hinder thee; but don't touch my factory-hands."

"Caution never does any harm . . . . hey?"—remarked Nezhdánoff, with a caustic, half-smile.

Solómin grinned broadly, as was his wont.

"Precisely so, brother Alexyéi; it never does any harm.—But whom do I behold here? Where are we?"

These last exclamations referred to Marianna, who made her appearance on the threshold of her room in a much-washed, motley-hued print gown, with a yellow kerchief about her shoulders, a red one on her head.—Tatyána was peeping forth from behind her back, and good-naturedly admiring her. Marianna looked both fresher and younger in her simple attire: it was much more becoming to her than the long-tailed kaftan was to Nezhdánoff.

"Vasíly Feodótitch, please do not laugh,"—entreated Marianna, and blushed the colour of a poppy.

"Hey, there, young couple!"—Tatyána was exclaiming in the meantime, as she clapped her hands.—"Only, my dear little dove, thou lad, don't be angry; thou art fine, fine; but in comparison with my lass—thou cuttest no figure at all."

"And it 's a fact—she is charming!"—Nezhdánoff said to himself.—"Oh, how I love her!"

"And see here,"—pursued Tatyána:—"she has exchanged rings with me.—She has given me her gold one, and taken my silver one."[1]

[1] According to the strict canonical rule—which is not always complied with—a woman's wedding-ring should be silver, while her husband's is gold, to symbolise their comparative value in the family.—TRANSLATOR.

"Young girls do not wear plain gold rings," —remarked Marianna.

Tatyána sighed.

"I will keep it for you, my dear, never fear."

"Come, sit down; sit down, both of you,"—began Solómin, who, with his head somewhat bent, had been gazing at Marianna all this time;—"in former days, as you will remember, people always used to sit down a bit before they set out on a journey.—And you both have a long and arduous journey before you."

Marianna, still blushing vividly, sat down; so did Nezhdánoff; so did Solómin . . . and, at last, Tatyána seated herself also "on the picket," —that is to say, on a thick billet of wood, which was standing on one end.—Solómin looked at them all in turn.

"'We're going away, so let us see,
How well we sit, we three . . . .'"

he said, with a slight contraction of the brows,—and suddenly burst out laughing, but so delightfully that no one took offence, but, on the contrary, every one found it extremely agreeable.

But Nezhdánoff suddenly rose to his feet.

"I am going,"—he said,—"this very minute; all this is very charming—only, it smacks somewhat of vaudeville with change of costumes.—Don't worry,"—he said to Solómin;—"I will not

touch thy factory-hands. I will roam about the neighbourhood, and return and tell thee, Marianna, of my adventures—if there is anything to tell. Give me thy hand, for luck!"

"You ought to drink tea first,"—remarked Tatyána.

"No, what 's the use of tea-drinking!—If necessary, I will step into an eating-house, or simply into a dram-shop."

Tatyána shook her head.

"Along our highways now, the eating-houses have become as thick as fleas in a sheepskin coat. The villages are still extensive . . . take Balmasóvo, for example. . . . ."

"Good-bye, for the present, . . may you remain happy!"—Nezhdánoff corrected himself, entering into his rôle of petty burgher.—But before he could reach the door out of the corridor, under his very nose, Pável popped up—and handing him a tall, slender staff with a strip of bark carved in the form of a spiral for its entire length, remarked:

"Please to receive this, Alexyéi Dmítritch,—lean on it as you walk,—and the further from you you set this stick, the more agreeable it will be."

Nezhdánoff took the staff in silence, and departed; Pável followed him.—Tatyána made a move to leave, also, but Marianna rose and detained her. . .

"Wait, Tatyána Osípovna; I need you."

"But I shall be back directly with the samovár. Your comrade went off without his tea; he was in a great hurry, apparently. . . . But why shouldst thou punish thyself?—When you get further on—things will be clearer."

Tatyána left the room; Solómin also rose to his feet. Marianna was standing with her back to him;—and when, at last, she turned toward him,—as he did not utter a single word for a long time,—she beheld on his countenance, in his eyes, which were riveted on her, an expression which she had not hitherto observed in him: a questioning, uneasy, almost curious expression.

She grew confused, and blushed again.—And Solómin seemed to be ashamed of what she had surprised upon his face, and began to talk more loudly than usual.

"Well, now, Marianna. . . So here you have made a beginning."

"What beginning, Vasíly Feodótitch!—What sort of a beginning is this? I feel very awkward, all of a sudden. Alexyéi spoke the truth: we really are playing a sort of comedy."

Solómin seated himself again on his chair.

"Why, allow me to ask you, Marianna . . . . what sort of an idea are you forming to yourself of this *beginning?*—You don't mean to erect barricades, with a flag on top—and, 'hurrah! for the republic!'—That 's not a woman's business.

—But here, you will teach some Lukérya or other something good to-day;—and it will be difficult for you, because Lukérya does not understand easily, and is abashed by you,—and she fancies, moreover, that what you are undertaking to teach her is entirely superfluous:—and after two or three weeks you will be tormenting yourself with another Lukérya; and, in the meantime, you will wash a small child, or show it its alphabet,—or administer medicine to a sick person . . . there 's a beginning for you."

"But the Sisters of Mercy do that, Vasíly Feodótitch! In that case, what use have I for . . . . all this?"—Marianna pointed to herself, and to her surroundings, with an irresolute gesture of the hand.—"I was dreaming of something else."

"You wanted to sacrifice yourself?"

Marianna's eyes flashed.

"Yes . . . yes . . . yes!"

"And how about Nezhdánoff?"

Marianna shrugged her shoulders.

"What of Nezhdánoff? We shall go together . . . or I shall go alone."

Solómin stared intently at Marianna.

"Do you know what, Marianna? . . You must excuse the impropriety of the expression . . . but, in my opinion, to comb the hair of a scabby little child is a sacrifice,—and a great sacrifice, of which not many are capable."

"But I do not refuse to do that, Vasíly Feodótitch."

"I know that you do not refuse! Yes, *you* are capable of that.—And you will do that—for a while—and then, probably—you will do something else."

"But, to that end, I must learn from Tatyána."

"That also is very good indeed . . . learn. —You will wash pots like a dirty-faced scullery-maid and pluck fowls. . . And then, who knows but you will save the fatherland!"

"You are laughing at me, Vasíly Feodótitch."

Solómin slowly shook his head.

"Oh, my dear Marianna, believe me; I am not laughing at you. And my words contain the simple truth. You are already, all you Russian women, more capable and more lofty than we men."

Marianna raised her drooping lids.

"I should like to justify your expectations, Solómin . . . . and then—I should be ready to die!"

Solómin rose.

"No, live . . . live! That is the chief thing. —By the way, would not you like to know what is going on now in your house, as the result of your flight?—Whether they are not taking some measures? All you have to do is to whisper to

Pável:—he will find out all about it in a twinkling."

Marianna reflected.

"What a remarkable man that is of yours!"

"Yes . . he is rather astonishing.—Now, when you get ready to marry Alexyéi—he will arrange that also, with Zosíma. . . Remember, I told you that there is a priest. . . And he is not wanted . . . yet? No?"

"No."

"Well, if he is n't—he is n't."—Solómin walked to the door which separated the two rooms—Nezhdánoff's and Marianna's—and stooped down to the lock.

"What are you looking at there?"—asked Marianna.

"Does the key work?"

"Yes,"—whispered Marianna.

Solómin turned to her.—She did not raise her eyes.

"So it is not necessary to find out what the intentions of the Sipyágins are?"—he said cheerily:—"it is n't necessary?"

Solómin was on the point of departing.

"Vasíly Feodótitch. . . ."

"What is your will?"

"Tell me, please, why you, who are always so taciturn, are so talkative with me? You cannot imagine how it delights me."

"Why?"—Solómin took both of her small,

soft hands in his large, hard hands.—"Why?—Well, it must be because I am very fond of you. Good-bye."

He left the room. . . . . Marianna stood staring after him, meditated,—and went off to find Tatyána, who had not yet managed to bring her samovár, and with whom she drank tea—to tell the truth,—and also washed the pots, and plucked fowls,—and even combed the tousled head of some boy or other.

Toward dinner-time she returned to her quarters. . . She did not have to wait long for Nezhdánoff.

He returned, weary, dusty—and fairly dropped upon the divan. She immediately seated herself by his side.—"Well, what? Well, what? Tell me!"

"Dost thou remember these two lines,"—he answered her, in a weak voice:

"'Everything would be ridiculous—
If it were not so sad. . . .'

"Dost thou remember?"

"Of course I remember."

"Well, those same lines apply capitally to my first excursion. . . But, no! Decidedly there was a great deal about it that was ridiculous. In the first place, I have convinced myself that there is nothing easier than to act a part: no one

dreamed of suspecting me.—Only, what I had not thought of was this: one must concoct some sort of story in advance . . . otherwise, they ask: 'Whence comest thou? Why?'—and thou hast no answer ready. However, even that is almost unnecessary. Only stand a treat to a glass of liquor in the dram-shop—and you may tell what lies you like."

"And didst thou . . . lie?" asked Marianna.

"I did . . . to the best of my ability. . . In the second place, everybody, positively everybody with whom I talked, is dissatisfied; and no one even cares to know how to remedy that dissatisfaction!—But in the matter of propaganda, I proved to be weak; I simply left two pamphlets in rooms, on the sly—and thrust one into a peasant's cart. . . What will come of them,—Thou only, O Lord, knowest!—I offered pamphlets to four men. One inquired whether it was a religious book? another said that he did not know how to read—and took it for his children because there was a picture on the cover; the third first kept agreeing with me—'so-ah, so-ah!' . . . then suddenly swore at me, in the most unexpected manner, and did not take it, either; the fourth at last took it—and thanked me a great deal;—but, apparently, did not understand one jot of all I had been saying to him. Moreover, a dog bit me in the leg; a peasant woman, on the threshold of her cottage, menaced

me with the oven-fork, adding: 'Ugh! disgusting beast!—You Moscow ne'er-do-well!'—And a soldier on leave kept shouting after me: 'Wait! halt! we 'll make things lively for thee, brother!' —And he had been drinking at my expense."

"And what more?"

"What more?—I have rubbed a corn on my foot: one boot is frightfully large. And now I am hungry, and my head is splitting with the vodka."

"Why, didst thou drink a great deal?"

"No, only a little—for the sake of the example; but I have been in five dram-shops. . Only I cannot stand that vile stuff—that vodka—at all. And how our common people drink it—is incomprehensible! If it is necessary to drink vodka in order to simplify myself—no, I thank you!"

"And yet no one suspected thee?"

"Not a soul.—One liquor-dealer, such a fat, pale man he was, with white eyes, was the only man who looked suspiciously at me. I heard him say to his wife: 'Keep thine eye on that red-headed . . . cock-eyed fellow.' (But I never knew before that I was cross-eyed.) 'He 's a sharper; just see how massively he 's drinking!' Precisely what 'massively' denotes in such circumstances, I did not understand; but it was hardly intended for praise.—Something in the line of Gógol's 'moveton' (*mauvais ton*), in

'The Inspector.' Possibly, that I was trying to spill the vodka under the table. Okh, it is difficult, very difficult, for an æsthetic to come in contact with real life!"

"The next effort will be more successful,"—Marianna consoled Nezhdánoff—"but I am glad that thou hast taken a humorous view of thy first effort. . . . For, as a matter of fact, thou hast not found it irksome?"

"No, I was not bored; I even found it amusing.—But I know for a certainty that I shall think about it all now—and I shall feel disgusted and melancholy."

"No, no! I will not let thee think—I will tell thee what I have been doing. Our dinner will be brought directly; by the way, thou must know that I have washed the pot, in which Tatyána cooked the cabbage-soup, in capital style.—And I will tell thee everything . . . everything, with every mouthful."

And so she did. Nezhdánoff listened to her recitals—and gazed and gazed at her . . . . so that she paused several times, in order to give him a chance to say why he was staring at her. . . . . But he maintained silence.

After dinner, she suggested to him that she should read aloud from Spielhagen. But she had not managed to finish the first chapter, when he sprang abruptly to his feet, and, approaching her, fell at her feet. She half rose, he clasped

her knees in both arms—and began to utter passionate, incoherent, desperate words! "He wished to die, he knew that he should die soon." . . . . She never moved, offered no resistance; she calmly yielded to his passionate embrace, calmly, even affectionately she gazed down upon him. She laid both her hands on his head, which he had hidden in the folds of her gown.—But this very composure had a more powerful effect upon him than if she had repulsed him.—He rose, said: "Forgive me, Marianna, for what has happened to-day and yesterday; repeat to me that thou art ready to wait until I shall be worthy of thy love,—and forgive me."

"I have pledged thee my word . . . . I cannot change."

"Well, I thank thee; farewell."

Nezhdánoff left the room;—Marianna locked herself in her chamber.

## XXX

A FORTNIGHT later, in the same quarters, this is what Nezhdánoff was writing to his friend Sílin, as he bent over his three-legged table, on which dimly and economically burned a single tallow candle.—(It was already long past midnight. On the divan, on the floor, lay muddy garments, flung off in hot haste; a fine, persistent rain was beating against the windows, and a broad, warm breeze was flitting across the roof in great gusts.)

"DEAR VLADÍMIR, I write to thee, without putting an address, and this letter will even be sent by a special messenger to a distant postal station; for my sojourn here is a secret; and to betray it would mean to ruin not myself alone.—It is enough for thee to know that I have been living in a large factory, in company with Marianna, for these last two weeks. We ran away from the Sipyágins on the very day I wrote to thee. A friend has given us an asylum here: I shall call him Vasíly. He is the principal personage here—a most excellent man. Our sojourn in this factory is temporary. We are staying here until the time for action shall arrive;—although, judging from what has taken place thus far,—that time is not likely ever to arrive!

Vladímir, my heart is very, very heavy. First of all, I must tell thee that, although Marianna and I ran away together—yet we are as brother and sister, up to the present time. She loves me . . . and has told me that she will be mine, if . . . I feel that I have a right to demand that from her.

"Vladímir, I do not feel that I possess that right! She trusts me, trusts in my honour—I will not deceive her. I know that I never have loved, and that I never shall love any one—(this is certainly so)—more than I do her. But, nevertheless! How can I unite her fate to mine forever! A living being to a corpse?—No, not to a corpse—to a being who is half dead?—Where would be my conscience?—Thou wilt say, if there were strong passion,—conscience would hold its peace.—That is precisely the point,—that I am a corpse; an honourable, well-meaning corpse, if thou wilt.—Please do not vociferate that I always exaggerate. . . . Everything I am telling thee is the truth! the truth!—Marianna—is a very reserved nature, and now she is entirely absorbed in her activity, in which she believes. . . While I . . . .

"Come—let us throw aside love and personal happiness—and all that sort of thing.—Here, for the past two weeks, I have been 'going to the people'—and I give you my word that anything more stupid it is impossible to imagine. Of course, it is all my fault—and not the fault of the cause. Let us assume that I am not a Slavyánophil: I am not one of those who *heal themselves* by the people, by contact with them; I do not apply it to my aching abdomen, like a flannel belly-plaster. . . . I want to act upon it myself;—

but how?—How is that to be accomplished? The way it turns out is, that when I am with the people, I am constantly bending down—and listening—and when there is any occasion for me to say something myself—I make a miserable failure of it. I am conscious, myself, that I am not fitted for it. I am just like a bad actor, in some one else's part. Conscientiousness is out of place here, and so is scepticism—and even a sort of wretched humour, directed against myself. . All this is not worth a brass farthing!—The very memory of it is odious;—it is odious to me to look at the old rags which I am dragging around on my person,—at that masquerade, as Vasfly expresses it!—They say that one must learn the language of the common people, learn their habits and customs. . . . Nonsense! nonsense! nonsense! One must *believe* in what he says,—and talk as he pleases! I once chanced to hear something in the nature of a sermon from one of the dissenting prophets. The devil knows what nonsense he was chattering, what sort of a mixture of the church, bookish and popular languages, and of something else which was not Russian,—but a sort of White Russian dialect,—he was using . . . . 'tzobye' instead of 'tebye' [to thee];—'ist' instead of 'yest' [eat];—'ui' instead of 'i'—and, moreover, he kept drumming the same thing over and over, like a black-cock!—'The spirit hath come upon me . . . the spirit hath come upon me. . . .' But his eyes flashed, his voice was dull and firm, his fists were clenched—and he was as if all made of iron! His auditors did not understand—but they adored! And they followed him!—But when I begin to speak,—it is like a guilty man, and I keep begging

forgiveness. I ought to resemble the dissenters—truly; their wisdom is not great . . . . but where do they get their faith, their faith! !—Now, Marianna has faith. She toils from early morning, she bustles about with Tatyána—she is a peasant woman here, kind and far from stupid; by the way, she says of us, that we want to simplify ourselves, and she calls us 'the simplified'; —well, Marianna busies herself with that woman—she never sits down for a minute—she 's a regular ant!—She rejoices that her hands are growing red and hard; and she is in instant expectation that, if necessary, she will ascend the scaffold! The scaffold, forsooth! She has even tried to do without shoes; she went off somewhere barefooted, and returned barefooted. I heard her—afterward—washing her feet for a long time; I noticed that she walked on them with wariness,—because they pained her, through her not being used to it; but she was as cheerful and bright of face as though she had found a treasure, as though the sun were illuminating her. Yes—Marianna is a brave person!—And I, when I begin to talk to her about my feelings—in the first place, I begin to feel ashamed, as though I were putting my hand on other people's property; and, in the second place, that look . . . oh, that dreadful, submissive, unresisting look . . which seems to say:—'Take me . . . . but *remember!* . . . And to what purpose is all this? Is there not something better, something higher on earth?'—That is to say, in other words: 'Don the stinking kaftan, go to the people. . . .' And so I am going to that people. . . .

"Oh, at such times, how I curse this nervousness, this sensitiveness, impressionability, fastidiousness, all that

inheritance from my aristocratic father! What right had he to thrust me into life, equipping me with organs which are incompatible with the sphere in which I must revolve? He created a bird—and pushed it into the water!—an æsthetic—and plunged him into the mud! a democrat, a lover of the common people, in whom the mere odour of that accursed vodka—'green wine'—evokes nausea, almost vomiting. . . . .

"Just see to what lengths I have gone with my vain babbling! I have taken to abusing my father!—And I made myself a democrat: he had nothing to do with that.

"Yes, Vladímir, I am in a bad way. Certain grey, evil thoughts have begun to haunt me!—Thou wilt, in all probability, ask me whether, in the course of these two weeks, I have not hit upon any cheering manifestation, on any good, live, though ignorant man?—What shall I say to thee? I have encountered something of that sort . . . I did even come across one very fine man—a splendid, dashing young fellow.—But turn the subject as I would—he would have none of me and my pamphlets—and that was the end of it! A hand in the factory here, Pável—(he is Vasíly's right-hand man, very clever and adroit, a future 'head' . . . I think I have written to thee about him)—has a friend, one of the peasants. His name is Elizár . . . a bright mind also—and a free soul, without limits; but just as soon as he is with me—it is as though a wall rose up between us! . . He fairly begins to look 'no!' And here 's another whom I hit upon . . . but he was one of the irascible sort.—'Here now, thou, master,' says he, 'don't daub it on—but say it straight out: wilt thou

give up all the land—or not?'—'What dost thou mean?' I answered him,—'what sort of a gentleman am I?' (And I remember, also, that I added: 'Christ be with thee!')—'But if thou art one of the common people, where 's the sense of thy talk?' says he. 'Just be so good as to let me alone!'

"And here 's another thing I have noticed: if any one listens to thee with great willingness, and accepts the little books—thou mayest know he is one of the worthless, stuffed with wind; or, if thou chancest upon a fluent talker—he is one of the educated classes, who knows how to do nothing, except to keep repeating some phrase to which he has taken a fancy.—One, for example, simply tortured me: he kept saying: '*an*dustry.'—Say what you would to him, he replied: 'That, of course, is *an*dustry!'—Ah, devil take thee!—One more observation. . . . Dost thou recall, once upon a time, long ago, there was some talk of 'superfluous' men, of Hamlets?—Just imagine, such 'superfluous men' are now to be met with among the peasants!—Of course, with a peculiar tinge . . . and, moreover, they are chiefly of consumptive build.—They are interesting subjects—and come to us gladly; but so far as the cause is concerned—they are good for nothing; just as the Hamlets of earlier days were. Well, and what is one to do, under the circumstances?—Set up a secret printing-press? But there are plenty of little books without that, and of the sort as to which the saying is: 'Cross thyself, and take thine axe,'—and of the sort to which the saying applies: 'Take thine axe simply.' Concoct tales from popular life, with stuffing? I don't believe they would get printed.—Or, actually, take to

the axe? . . . But to pursue whom, with whom, why?—In order that a government soldier may shoot thee down, slap-dash, with a government gun? But that is a rather complicated sort of suicide! It would be better to put an end to myself with my own hand. At all events—then I shall know when and how,—and can choose for myself, into what spot to fire!

"Really, it seems to me that if a war of the populace were in progress anywhere now—I would betake myself thither, not in order to set any one free (free others, while your own are not free!!)—but in order to make an end of myself. . . .

"Our friend Vasíly, the one who is harbouring us here, is a happy man: he belongs to our camp—and is such a composed fellow.—He is never in a hurry. I would revile any one else, . . . but him I cannot. And it appears that the whole gist of it lies, not in one's convictions—but in the character. Vasíly has a character of the sort which is so finely balanced that the addition of a needle would destroy the equilibrium.—Well, and he is right.—He sits a great deal with me, with Marianna.—And here 's one remarkable thing. I love her, and she loves me (I see that thou wilt smile at this phrase—but God is my witness that it is so!);—but we find hardly anything to say to each other.—But with him she disputes, and argues, and she listens to him.—I am not jealous of him;—and he is preparing to get her a place somewhere—at least, she is beseeching him to do it;—only, my heart grows bitter, as I watch them.—For, just fancy; if I were to hint a word about marriage, she would consent on the spot—and pope Zosíma would appear on the scene—'Rejoice, oh,

Isaiah!'[1] . . . and all the rest of it, in due form. Only, that would not make me more at ease—and *nothing would be changed*. . . . There is no issue to the situation!—Life has docked my tail, my Vladímir, as thou wilt remember that acquaintance of ours, the tipsy tailor, used to say to us when he was complaining about his wife. However, I feel that this will not last long. I feel that something is impending. . . .

"Did not I, myself, demand and demonstrate that we must 'set to work'?—Well, and here we are, about to set to work.

"I do not remember whether I have written to thee about another of my acquaintances, a swarthy-faced man—a relative of the Sipyágins? He will, probably, stir up such a mess as it will not be easy to straighten out. I had meant to wind up this letter—but just see! —I keep scribbling verses.

"I do not read them to Marianna—she does not like them very much—but thou . . . sometimes hast praise for them; but the principal point is, that thou wilt not babble. I have been struck by one universal phenomenon in Russia. . . But here are the verses:

## SLUMBER

"'T is long since I have been in my native land. . . .
But I have found in it no noticeable change.
There is still the same deathly, irrational stagnation,
Buildings without roofs, and walls in ruin,

[1] The hymn which is sung in the marriage ceremony, while the priest is leading the bridal pair thrice round the lectern. It is an adaptation (with brief additions) from the last half of Isaiah vii. 14.—TRANSLATOR.

And the self-same dirt, and stench, and poverty, and sadness!
And the same servile glance, now insolent, now dejected. . . .
Our people have become free; and the free hand
Hangs, as of old, like a lean whip-lash.
All, all is as of yore. . . And in one point only
Have we outstripped Europe, Asia, all the world. . . . .
No! never yet with such a frightful slumber
Have my amiable compatriots lain sleeping!

"All around is sleeping: everywhere, in the villages, the towns,
In peasant-carts, in sledges, by day, by night, sitting, standing. . .
The merchant sleeps, the official, too; the guard on watch is sleeping
Beneath the snowy cold—and in the burning heat!
And the condemned man sleeps—and the judge slumbers;
In dead sleep lie the peasants; they reap, they plough —and sleep; they thresh—
And still sleep on; the father sleeps, the mother sleeps, the whole family sleeps. . . .
All are sleeping! He sleeps who beats, and he who receives the beating!
Only the imperial pot-house—closes never an eye;
And clasping the glass of rectified spirits with all five fingers,
With brow resting on the pole, and heels on the Caucasus,
The fatherland, holy Russia, sleeps on, in slumber eternal!

"Pray, forgive me; I did not mean to send thee so melancholy a letter, without even causing thee to smile at the end (thou certainly hast noticed the somewhat strained rhyme in places . . . but that is the least part!).—When shall I write thee my next letter? And shall I write it? Whatever happens to me, I am convinced that thou wilt not forget—

"Thy faithful friend,

"A. N.

"P. S. Yes, our people is sleeping. . . . . But I have a presentiment that if anything should awaken it—it will not be that which *we* think. . . ."

Having written the last line, Nezhdánoff threw aside his pen—and said to himself: "Come—now try to go to sleep and forget all that twaddle, rhymester!"—he went to bed . . . . but for a long time sleep fled his eyes.

On the following morning, Marianna waked him as she passed through his room on her way to Tatyána; but he had only just managed to get dressed, when she came back again. Her face expressed joy and trepidation: she appeared to be excited.

"Dost thou know, Alyósha: they say that in the T. . . . district—near here—it has already begun!"

"What? What has begun? Who says so?"

"Pável.—They say the peasants are rising—that they refuse to pay their taxes, and are assembling in crowds."

"Hast thou heard that thyself?"

"Tatyána told me.—But here is Pável himself. Ask him."

Pável entered, and confirmed what Marianna had said.

"In the T. . . . district things are uneasy—that is true!"—he said, wagging his small beard, and screwing up his brilliant black eyes.—"I suppose it must be some of Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch's work. He has not been at home for the last four days."

Nezhdánoff picked up his cap.

"Whither art thou going?"—asked Marianna.

"Why . . . thither,"—he replied, without raising his eyes, and with frowning brows.—"To the T. . . . district."

"Then I am going with thee. Thou wilt take me, wilt thou not? Only give me time to put on a large kerchief."

"This is not a woman's business,"—said Nezhdánoff gloomily, staring at the floor as before, as though in a rage.

"No . . . no! . . . Thou dost well to go; otherwise Markéloff would consider thee a coward. . . And I am going with thee."

"I am not a coward,"—said Nezhdánoff, in the same gloomy manner as before.

"I meant to say, that he would consider us both cowards. I am going with thee."

Marianna went to her own room to get her kerchief—and Pável emitted an: "Ehe-he!" on

the sly, and as though he were drawing in his breath, and immediately vanished.—He had rushed off to warn Solómin.

Marianna had not yet made her appearance, when Solómin entered Nezhdánoff's room.—The latter was standing with his face to the window, with his brow resting on his hand, and his hand against the glass. Solómin touched him on the shoulder. He wheeled swiftly round.—Dishevelled, unwashed, Nezhdánoff had a wild and strange aspect. Solómin, also, had changed of late. He had grown sallow, his face had lengthened out, his upper teeth had become slightly visible. . . . He, also, seemed agitated, in so far as his " well-balanced " soul was capable of agitation.

" Markéloff has not been able to restrain himself,"—he began.—" This may end badly; for him —in the first place . . . well, and for others, also."

" I want to go, and see what is taking place there . . . ." said Nezhdánoff.

" So do I "—added Marianna, making her appearance on the threshold.

Solómin turned slowly toward her.

" I would not advise you to do it, Marianna.—You might betray yourself—and us; involuntarily, and without any necessity whatever.—Let Nezhdánoff go, and sniff the air a little, if he likes . . . . and only a little, at that!—but why should you go? "

"I do not wish to leave him."

"You will hamper him."

Marianna darted a glance at Nezhdánoff. He was standing motionless, with an impassive, surly face.

"But what if there should be danger?"—she asked.

Solómin smiled.

"Have no fear . . . when there is danger, I will let you go."

Marianna silently removed her kerchief from her head, and sat down.

Then Solómin addressed himself to Nezhdánoff.

"And do thou, brother, as a matter of fact, look into things a bit.—Only, please be as cautious as possible.—But thou shalt be driven thither. And return as speedily as possible. Dost thou promise, Nezhdánoff? Dost thou promise?"

"Yes."

"Yes,—faithfully?"

"Why, everybody here obeys thee, beginning with Marianna."

Nezhdánoff went out into the corridor without bidding them good-bye. Pável popped up from out of the darkness, and ran on ahead down the stairs, clattering the iron-bound heels of his boots.—He was to drive Nezhdánoff.

Solómin seated himself by Marianna.

"Did you hear Nezhdánoff's last words?"

"Yes; he is vexed, because I obey you more than I do him. And, really, he is in the right.—I love *him*, but I obey *you*. He is dearer to me . . . and you are nearer to me."

Solómin cautiously caressed her hand with his.

"This is . . . a very disagreeable predicament,"—he said, at last.—"If Markéloff is mixed up in it—he is lost."

Marianna shuddered.

"Lost?"

"Yes.—He never does anything by halves—and he does not hide behind others."

"Lost!"—whispered Marianna again—and the tears streamed down her face. "Akh, Vasíly Feodótitch, I am very sorry for him! But why cannot he triumph? Why must he, inevitably, perish?"

"Because, Marianna, in such enterprises, the leaders always perish, even if they are successful. . . But in this affair, which *he* has plotted, not only will the first and the second perish—but the tenth . . . . . and the twentieth, also. . . . ."

"And so we shall not live to see the end?"

"The end you have in mind?—Never. We shall not behold it with our eyes: with these living eyes of ours.—Well, with our spiritual eyes. . . . That is another matter. You may as well enjoy it now, on the spot.—There is nothing to hinder."

"Then why do you, Solómin . . ."

"What is it?"

"Why do you walk in that path?"

"Because there is no other.—That is to say, Markéloff's aim and my own are, in reality, the same;—but our roads are different."

"Poor Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch!"—said Marianna sadly. Again Solómin cautiously caressed her.

"Come—enough of that! Nothing is certain as yet. Let us see what news Pável will bring. —In our . . . . profession, we must be firm.— The English say: 'Never say die.'—It is a good saying. Better than the Russian one: 'Misfortune has come, throw open the gate!'—There 's no use in grieving in advance."

Solómin rose from his chair.

"And how about the place which you were to obtain for me?"—asked Marianna suddenly. —Tears were still glistening on her cheeks, but there was no longer any sadness in her eyes.

Solómin sat down again.

"Are you so anxious to get away from here as quickly as possible?"

"Oh, no! but I wanted to be of use."

"Marianna, you are very useful here. Do not leave us, wait.—What do you want?"—inquired Solómin of Tatyána, who entered.—(He addressed Pável only as "thou"—and that because

he was too unhappy, if Solómin took it into his head to call him "you.")

"There 's some sort of a female down-stairs, inquiring for Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—replied Tatyána, laughing, and throwing her hands apart; —"I told her that he was n't with us, not with us at all.—'We don't even know what sort of a man he is,'—says I.—But then he . . . . ."

"Whom do you mean by 'he'?"

"Why, that same female specimen.—She took and wrote her name on this paper here—and says I am to show it—and that he will be admitted; and that if Alexyéi Dmítritch really is not at home, then he will wait."

On the paper, in large letters, stood: "Miss Mashúrin."

"Admit her," said Solómin.—"It will not put you out, if she comes here, will it, Marianna? She, also, is one of us."

"Not in the least."

A few moments later Miss Mashúrin made her appearance on the threshold—in the self-same gown in which we beheld her in the first chapter.

## XXXI

"Is not Nezhdánoff at home?"—she asked: then, perceiving Solómin, she stepped up to him, and gave him her hand. — "Good morning, Solómin!"—At Marianna she merely cast a side-long glance.

"He will be back soon,"—replied Solómin.—"But, allow me to inquire, from whom did you learn . . . . ."

"From Markéloff.—But it is already known also, in the town . . . to two or three persons."

"Really?"

"Yes. Some one has been babbling.—And it is said that Nezhdánoff himself has been recognised."

"So much for your disguises!"—muttered Solómin.—"Permit me to introduce you,"—he added aloud.—"Miss Sinétzky, Miss Mashúrin! —Have a seat."

Miss Mashúrin nodded her head slightly, and seated herself.

"I have a letter for Nezhdánoff; I have a verbal request for you, Solómin."

"What is it? From whom?"

"From a person whom you know. . . . How are things with you . . . is everything ready?"

"I have nothing in readiness."

Miss Mashúrin opened her tiny eyes to their fullest extent.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Do you mean just that—absolutely nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"Is that what I am to say?"

"It is."

Miss Mashúrin meditated, and pulled a cigarette out of her pocket.

"May I have a light?"

"Here is a match for you."

Miss Mashúrin lighted her cigarette.

"'They' expected something different,"—she began.—"And all about, things are quite different from what they are with you. However, that is your business. But I cannot remain with you long. Only, I must see Nezhdánoff, and give him the letter."

"Whither are you bound?"

"Far away from here." (In reality, she was going to Geneva, but did not wish to tell Solómin this. She did not regard him as thoroughly trustworthy, and, moreover, "an outsider" was sitting there. Miss Mashúrin, who knew hardly a word of German, was being sent to Geneva in order that she might there hand over, to a person with whom she was not acquainted, one half of a bit of

cardboard, with a vine-branch sketched on it, and two hundred and seventy-nine rubles.)

"And where is Ostrodúmoff? With you?"

"No. He is there . . . hard by. . . . You 'll hear from him. That 's a man who will respond to a call. Pímen will not come to grief. There 's no occasion for worrying."

"How did you come hither?"

"In a peasant-cart. . . How else should I have come? Give me another match. . . ." Solómin gave her a lighted match. . . .

"Vasíly Feodótitch!"—suddenly whispered a voice outside the door. "Please come here!"

"Who is there? What is wanted?"

"Please come here,"—repeated the voice suggestively and persistently.—"Some strange workmen have arrived, and are saying all sorts of things, and Pável Egóritch is not here."

Solómin made his excuses, rose, and left the room.

Miss Mashúrin began to scrutinise Marianna, and stared so long that the latter grew embarrassed.

"Pardon me,"—she said suddenly, in her rough, abrupt voice,—"I am a plain sort of person, I do not know . . . . how.—Do not be angry; if you choose, do not answer. Are *you* the young girl who left the Sipyágins?"

Marianna was somewhat surprised, but said:

"Yes."

"With Nezhdánoff?"

"Well, yes."

"Pray . . . give me your hand. Forgive me, please. You must be a fine girl, if he has fallen in love with you."

Marianna pressed Miss Mashúrin's hand.

"And are you intimately acquainted with Nezhdánoff?"

"I know him. I have seen him in Petersburg. That is why I speak. Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch told me, also. . . . ."

"Akh, Markéloff! Have you seen him recently?"

"Yes. Now he has gone away."

"Where?"

"Where he is ordered."

Marianna sighed.

"Akh, Miss Mashúrin, I am afraid for him."

"In the first place, why do you call me Miss? Those manners must be discarded. And, in the second place . . . . you say: 'I am afraid.' That, also, is inappropriate. You have no fear for yourself—and you must stop being afraid for others. One must neither think of himself nor fear for himself,—at all. Here is something perhaps . . . . here is something which occurs to me; it is easy for me, Fékla Mashúrin, to speak thus. I am homely. But you see . . . . . you are a beauty. So it would be more difficult for you." Marianna dropped her eyes and turned

away. "Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch said to me . . . (he knew that I had a letter for Nezhdánoff) . . . 'Don't go to the factory,'—he said to me,—'don't carry the letter; it will unsettle everything there. Let it alone! Both of them are happy there. . . . So let them remain! Don't interfere!' I should have been glad not to interfere . . . but what could I do with the letter?"

"It was imperatively necessary to deliver it,"—assented Marianna.—"But how kind he is, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch! Is it possible that he will perish, Mashúrina . . . or go to Siberia?"

"What if he does! Can't people get away from Siberia? And as for losing his life! Some people find life sweet, others find it bitter.—His life, also, is not refined sugar."

Again Miss Mashúrin gazed intently and searchingly at Marianna.

"And, in truth, you are a beauty,"—she exclaimed at last,—"a regular bird! I am thinking: Alexyéi does not come. . . . Would n't it be well to give you the letter? What 's the use of waiting?"

"I will give it to him, you may feel assured."

Miss Mashúrin leaned her cheek on one hand, and remained silent for a long, long time.

"Tell me,"—she began . . . . "excuse me . . . do you love him very much?"

"Yes."

Miss Mashúrin shook her ponderous head.

"Well, there is no necessity for asking whether he loves you? But I must go, or I shall, probably, be late. Tell him that I was here . . . . and wished to be remembered to him. Tell him: Miss Mashúrin came. You will not forget my name? No? Mashúrin. And the letter. . . . Stay, where did I put it?"

Miss Mashúrin rose, turned aside, pretended to fumble in her pockets, and, in the meantime, hastily carried to her mouth a tiny twisted paper, and swallowed it. "Aï, good heavens! Here's a piece of stupidity! Can it be possible that I have dropped it? I certainly have. Aï, what a calamity! What if some one should find it! . . No; it is n't anywhere. And so it has turned out as Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch wished!"

"Make another search," — whispered Marianna.

Miss Mashúrin waved her hand.

"No! What 's the use of searching? I have lost it!"

Marianna moved toward her.

"Well, then, kiss me!"

Miss Mashúrin suddenly embraced Marianna, and pressed her to her bosom with a force that was not feminine.

"I would n't have done that for anybody,"— she said dully;—"it 's contrary to my conscience, —in the first place. Tell him to be more cautious. . . And be so yourself also. Look out! Things

will go badly, very badly, with every one here before long. Go away, both of you, until . . . . Farewell!"—she added loudly, and harshly.—"Yes, and one thing more . . . . tell him . . . . No, nothing is necessary. Nothing."

Miss Mashúrin went away, banging the door behind her, and Marianna remained buried in thought, in the middle of the room.

"What is the meaning of this?"—she said at last.—"That woman certainly loves him more than I do! And what do her hints mean? And why has Solómin suddenly gone away, and does not return?"

She began to pace to and fro.—A strange sensation—a mixture of alarm and vexation—and wonder—took possession of her.—Why had not she gone with Nezhdánoff?—Solómin had dissuaded her . . . but where was he himself? And what was going on around her?—Miss Mashúrin, of course, out of sympathy for Nezhdánoff, had not given her that dangerous letter. . . . But how had she been able to bring herself to such disobedience?—Had she wished to display her magnanimity? By what right? And why was she, Marianna, so touched by this act?—An ugly woman takes an interest in a young man. . . . As a matter of fact—what is there unusual about that? And why had Miss Mashúrin assumed that Marianna's affection for Nezhdánoff was more powerful than the sentiment of duty? Perhaps

Marianna had not required that sacrifice at all? And what could that letter have contained?—A summons to immediate activity? What then!!

"And Markéloff?—He is in danger . . . . and we,—what are we doing?—Markéloff is sparing us both, he is giving us the possibility of being happy, he is not separating us . . . what is that? Is it, also, magnanimity . . . or scorn? And was it for this that we fled from that hated house, in order to remain together, and coo like turtle-doves?"

Thus did Marianna meditate. . . And that excited sense of vexation began to grow more and more powerfully active within her. Moreover, her vanity was stung. Why had they all left her . . . *all?* That "fat" woman had called her a little bird, a little beauty . . . . why not a little doll, and be done with it? And why had Nezhdánoff gone away, not alone, but with Pável? Exactly as though he needed a guardian! Yes, and what were Solómin's convictions, after all? Was not he a revolutionary at all? And was it possible that any one could think that she bore herself toward this otherwise than seriously?

This was a specimen of the thoughts which went whirling round and round, chasing one another, and getting entangled, in Marianna's excited brain. Compressing her lips tightly, and folding her arms in masculine fashion, she seated herself, at last, near the window, and again be-

came motionless, without leaning against the back of the chair,—all alert, tense, ready to spring up on the instant. She did not wish to go to Tatyána, to work: she wished but one thing: to wait!—And she waited, obstinately, almost viciously. From time to time, her own mood struck her as strange and incomprehensible. . . . But that made no difference! Once it even occurred to her: was not all this going on in her because of jealousy? But when she recalled poor Miss Mashúrin's face, she merely shrugged her shoulders, and waved her hand, dismissing the thought . . . . not in reality—but with the inward movement which corresponds to that gesture.

Marianna was obliged to wait a long time; at last, she heard the clatter of two persons ascending the stairs. She fixed her eyes on the door . . . the footsteps approached.—The door opened—and Nezhdánoff, supported under the arm by Pável, made his appearance on the threshold. He was deadly pale; his cap was gone; his dishevelled hair fell in dank locks upon his brow; his eyes stared straight in front of him, beholding nothing. Pável led him across the room (Nezhdánoff's legs moved weakly and uncertainly), and seated him on the divan.

Marianna sprang from her seat.

"What is the meaning of this? What is the matter with him? Is he ill?"

But Pável, who was engaged in setting Nezh-

dánoff down, replied to her, with a smile, half turned from her as he stood, over his shoulder:

"Pray do not worry: it will pass off directly. . . It 's only because he is n't used to it."

"But what is it?"—crossed-questioned Marianna, insistently.

"He 's a bit drunk. He drank liquor on an empty stomach; well, and this is the result!"

Marianna bent over Nezhdánoff. He was stretched, in a half-recumbent position, across the divan; his head drooped on his breast, his eyes were dim. . . . . He reeked of vódka: he was drunk.

"Alexyéi!"—broke from her lips.

With an effort, he raised his heavy eyelids, and tried to smile.

"Ah! Marianna!"—he stammered;—"thou hast kept repeating: si . . . sim . . . simplified p . . p . . people;—so now, I 'm a real simplified man. For all our common people are always drunk . . . . that is . . . . ."

He relapsed into silence;—then he muttered something unintelligible, closed his eyes . . . and fell asleep.—Pável carefully adjusted him on the divan.

"Don 't feel anxious, Marianna Vikéntievna," —he repeated:—"he 'll sleep a couple of hours —and get up as though nothing were the matter."

Marianna had intended to inquire how this had come about, but her questions would have de-

tained Pável; and she wished to be alone . . . that is to say, she did not wish that Pável should behold him any longer in such a disgraceful condition in her presence. She walked away to the window—and Pável, who instantly comprehended the whole affair, carefully covered Nezhdánoff's feet with the skirts of his kaftan, placed a pillow under his head, said once more: " It 's all right! " and left the room on tiptoe.

Marianna glanced around. Nezhdánoff's head had sunk heavily into the pillow; on his pallid face an impassive tenseness was visible, as with a person who was gravely ill.

" How did this happen? "—she thought.

## XXXII

THE way it had happened was this.

On seating himself with Pável in the peasant-cart, Nezhdánoff had suddenly fallen into an extremely excited state; and no sooner had they driven out of the mill-yard, and begun to roll along the highway in the direction of the T. . . . district, than he had begun to hail and to stop the peasants who passed them, and to make them brief but absurd speeches. "Why do you sleep? Get up! It is time!—Down with the taxes! Down with the landed proprietors!"

Some of the peasants stared at him in amazement; others went on their way past him, paying no heed to his outcries:—they took him for a drunken man; one such, even, on reaching home, related how he had encountered a Frenchman, who was yelling—"something unintelligible, with a thick pronunciation."—Nezhdánoff had sense enough to comprehend how unspeakably stupid, and even absurd, his actions were; but he had gradually "wound himself up" to such a point, that he had ceased to distinguish between what was sensible and what was stupid. Pável tried to soothe him; told him that he must not behave in

that way; that they would soon come to a large village, the first on the boundary of the T. . . . district—" Bábyi Klíutchi " (Women's Springs); that there they would be able to make inquiries. . . But Nezhdánoff did not stop . . . and, at the same time, his face had a mournful, almost despairing expression.

Their horse was very lively, plump, with a closely-clipped mane on its sinewy neck; it trotted along assiduously with its strong hoofs,—and required to be reined in constantly, as though it really were hastening to business, and bearing needful people.—Before they drove into " Bábyi Klíutchi," Nezhdánoff noticed, on one side of the road, in front of an open granary, eight peasant men; he instantly sprang from the cart, rushed up to them, and talked hurriedly for about five minutes, interspersing his remarks with sudden shouts, and flourishing his hands with a backward motion.—The words: " For freedom! Advance! Let us move on breast to breast!" burst forth hoarsely and resonantly from a mass of other less intelligible words. The peasants, who had assembled in front of the granary in order to discuss how to fill it again,—if only for the example —(it belonged to the commune, consequently it was empty)—stared at Nezhdánoff, and, apparently, listened to his speech with great attention; —but it is not probable that they understood anything, for when, at last, he flung away from them,

shouting, for the last time: "Freedom!"—one of them, the most sagacious, shook his head with profound thoughtfulness, saying: "What a severe man!"—and another remarked: "He must be some sort of a superior official!"—To which the sagacious one rejoined: "As a matter of course—he would n't take the skin off of his throat for nothing!"—"They will pay our money now!"—Nezhdánoff himself, as he climbed into the cart, and seated himself beside Pável, thought to himself: "Oh, Lord! What rubbish!—But then, not one of us knows how to make the people rise in rebellion,—perhaps this is the way?—There 's no time to pick and choose! Go ahead! Does your soul ache? Let it ache!"

They drove into a street. In the very middle of it, in front of the dram-shop, quite a number of people were assembled. Pável made an effort to hold back Nezhdánoff, but he flew out of the cart head over heels—and with a howl: "Brothers!" rushed at the crowd. . . . It parted a little; and Nezhdánoff again set to haranguing, without looking at any one, and as though he were in a rage, and weeping. But the result in this case was different from that in front of the granary.—A huge young fellow, with a beardless but savage face, in a short, dirty sheepskin coat, tall boots, and a sheepskin cap, stepped up to Nezhdánoff and, with a sweep of his hand slapping him on the shoulder:—"All right! You 're

a fine fellow!" he vociferated, in a whistling voice; "but halt! Dost thou not know that a dry spoon tears the mouth? Come hither! We can converse much more cleverly yonder."

He dragged Nezhdánoff into the dram-shop: —the rest of the crowd followed them in a mass. "Mikhéitch"—shouted the young fellow: "come on—give us a ten-kopék drink! my favourite tipple! I 'm treating a friend! Who he is, what 's his birth or his tribe—the devil only knows—but nobles must be treated well.—Drink,"—he said, turning to Nezhdánoff, and handing him a heavy, brimming glass, damp on the outside as though perspiring;—"drink,—if thou really art sorry for the likes of us!"—"Drink!"—murmured other voices. Nezhdánoff grasped the glass (he was in a sort of daze),—shouted: "To your health, my lads!" and tossed it off at one gulp.—Ugh! He quaffed it with the same sort of desperate hardihood with which he would have dashed forward to storm a battery, or upon an array of bayonets. . . . But what had happened to him!—Something smote him along the spine, and on his feet, scorched his throat, his breast, his stomach, forced tears into his eyes. . . A shudder of repulsion coursed all over his body,—and he could hardly control it. . . . . He shouted at the top of his voice, for the sake of appeasing it, in some way.—It suddenly became hot, and sticky, and stifling in the dark room of the dram-shop;

what a lot of people had gathered there!—Nezhdánoff began to talk at length, to shout with exasperation, with vehemence, to clap his hands into somebody's broad, wooden palms, to kiss some slippery beards or other. . . . The huge young fellow in the short overcoat also exchanged kisses with him—and all but crushed in his ribs. But this fellow proved to be sort of monster.—"I 'll cut the throat!"—he roared:—"I 'll cut the throat of every man who affronts our brother!—Or I 'll smash his pate in for him. . . . I 'll make him squeak! And I 'm able to do it! I 've been a butcher;—I know that business well!"—And thereupon he exhibited his huge fist, all covered with freckles. . . And at this point—O Lord!—some one began to shout again: "Drink!"—and again Nezhdánoff swallowed that loathsome poison. But this second time was awful! His very insides seemed to be torn with dull hooks.—His head swam—he began to see green circles.—An uproar arose, a ringing. . Oh, horrors! . . . . A third glass. . . Could he possibly get it down? Red noses advanced upon him, dusty hair, sunburned necks, napes furrowed with a net-work of wrinkles.—Hard hands seized hold of him.—"Show thy zeal!"—roared frenzied voices.—"Hold forth! Day before yesterday, just such another queer fish described things finely. — Drive ahead, — Mr. What 's-your-name!" . . . The earth reeled beneath Nezh-

dánoff's feet.—His own voice seemed strange to him, as though it proceeded from somewhere outside. . . Was this death?

And all of a sudden . . . an impression of fresh air on his face—and there was no more jostling, nor red visages, nor reek of liquor, sheepskin coats, tar, leather. . . And once more he was sitting in the cart with Pável, resisting, at first, and shouting: "Where are we going? Stop! I have not yet succeeded in telling them.—I must expound to them . . . ." and then he added: "And as for thee, thou devil, thou crafty man, what are thy opinions?"—And Pável answered him: "It would be a good thing if there were no gentry, and if all the land belonged to us—what could be better?—only, no such decree has been issued";—and quietly turned the horse round,—and suddenly slapped it on the back with the reins,—and off they went, at full speed, from that tumult and hubbub . . . and back to the factory. . . .

Nezhdánoff fell into a doze, and swayed to and fro, and the wind blew agreeably in his face—and did not allow bad thoughts to enter. . . .

Only, he was vexed because he had not been allowed to say all he wished. . . And again the wind caressed his inflamed face.

And then came the momentary apparition of Marianna, the momentary, burning sensation

of disgrace,—and then sleep, deep, death-like sleep. . . .

All this Pável related, later on, to Solómin. Neither did he conceal the fact that he himself had not interfered with Nezhdánoff's drinking . . . and that, had it not been for that, he could not have got him away from the pot-house.—The others would not have let him go.

"Well, and as he was beginning to weaken greatly, I begged with obeisances: 'Gentlemen,' says I, 'honoured sirs, let the lad go; you see, he 's a bit ill. . .' Well, and they released him; 'Only, thou must give us half a ruble to pay thy footing!' they said.—So I gave it."

"And thou didst well,"—Solómin lauded him.

Nezhdánoff slept; and Marianna sat by the window, and stared out into the flower-garden.—And, strange to say!—the evil, almost malicious feelings and thoughts which had agitated her previous to the arrival of Nezhdánoff with Pável left her all at once; Nezhdánoff himself was neither repulsive to her nor disgusting: she pitied him.—She knew very well that he was neither a dissipated man nor a drunkard—and she was already meditating what she would say to him when he should wake: something friendly, so that he might not feel too conscience-stricken and embittered. "I must manage so, I must,—that he shall himself narrate how this calamity befell him."

She was not excited; but she was sad . . . inconsolably sad. There had been wafted to her a genuine breath of that world to which she aspired . . . and she shuddered at its coarseness and ignorance.—To what sort of a Moloch was she preparing to sacrifice herself?

But—no! It could not be!—It had just happened so; it was accidental, and would pass off presently. It was a transitory impression, which had surprised her only because it had been too unexpected.—She rose, went to the divan on which Nezhdánoff was lying, wiped his pale brow, which even in slumber was painfully contracted, with her handkerchief, pushed back his hair. . .

Again she pitied him; as a mother pities her sick child. But she found it rather trying to look at him—and she softly retired into her own room, leaving the door unlocked.

She did not take up any work;—and she sat down again, and again thoughts besieged her.—She felt that time was fleeting past, that moment was vanishing after moment, and she even found it pleasant to feel this—and her heart began to beat—and again she began to expect something.

What had become of Solómin?

The door creaked softly—and Tatyána entered the room.

"What do you want?"—asked Marianna, almost with annoyance.

"Marianna Vikéntievna,"—began Tatyána in

an undertone.—"See here. You must not grieve, because it 's an every-day matter, and, moreover, God be thanked. . ."

"I am not grieving in the least, Tatyána Osípovna,"—Marianna interrupted her.—"Alexyéi Dmítritch is not quite well—it is a matter of no great importance!" . . .

"Well, that 's splendid!—But I kept thinking: My Marianna Vikéntievna does n't come; what 's the matter with her? thinks I.—But I would n't have come to you, all the same—for, in such cases, the first rule is: 'Don't touch, don't molest!'—only, a certain person—who knows what he is?—has made his appearance at the factory. He 's such a little fellow, and lame, to boot; and it 's—just seize and produce Alexyéi Dmítritch for him!—And it 's remarkable: this morning that female was asking for him . . . and now here 's this lame man.—And if you tell them that Alexyéi Dmítritch is n't here,—'Hand over Vasíly Feodótitch!—I won't go away until you do,' says he; 'the business is very important.'—We undertook to drive him away, as we did the woman.—Vasíly Feodótitch really is n't here . . . he has gone off;—but that limpy says:—'I won't go,' says he; 'I 'll wait even if it is until night.' . . . . So he 's walking about the yard.—Here, come hither, into the corridor; you can see him from the window; . . . see whether you know what sort of a cavalier he is."

Marianna followed Tatyána—she was obliged to pass Nezhdánoff—and again she noted the painfully-knitted brow, and again she drew her handkerchief across it.

Through the dusty pane of the window she descried the visitor, of whom Tatyána had spoken. He was a stranger to her.—But at that moment Solómin made his appearance from round a corner.

The little lame man briskly approached him, and offered his hand.—Solómin took it. Evidently he knew this man. Both disappeared. . . .

But lo, footsteps made themselves audible on the staircase. . . They were coming hither. . . .

Marianna quickly returned to her room—and halted in the middle of it, drawing her breath with difficulty.—She felt afraid . . . of what? She herself did not know.

Solómin's head made its appearance at the door.

"Marianna Vikéntievna, permit me to enter your room. I have brought a man who insists upon seeing you."

Marianna merely nodded in reply, and after Solómin there entered—Pákhlin.

## XXXIII

"I AM a friend of your husband's,"—he said, bowing low before Marianna, and apparently endeavouring to conceal from her his extremely agitated and terrified face;—"I am also a friend of Vasíly Feodótitch. Alexyéi Dmítritch is asleep;—I hear that he is not well; but I, unfortunately, have brought bad news, which I have managed to communicate, in part, to Vasíly Feodótitch—and in consequence of which it becomes necessary to take some decisive measures."

Pákhlin's voice kept breaking, like that of a man who is parched and tortured by thirst.—The news which he had brought was, in fact, extremely bad!—The peasants had seized Markéloff, and had conducted him to the town. The stupid-appearing clerk had betrayed Golúshkin; he had been arrested.—He, in his turn, was betraying everything and everybody; he wanted to go over to Orthodoxy;[1] he was contributing to the gymnasium a portrait of the Metropolitan Philarét, and had already forwarded five thousand rubles for distribution "to crippled warriors."

[1] That is, to the State Church, from which the *raskólniki* are a schism.—TRANSLATOR.

There could be no doubt about it, that he had betrayed Nezhdánoff; the police might make a descent upon the factory at any moment. Danger also threatened Vasíly Feodótitch.—"As for myself,"—added Pákhlin,—"I am surprised that I am still roaming about at liberty; although, you see, I never did occupy myself with politics, properly speaking, and have never taken part in any plots whatever!—I have taken advantage of the forgetfulness or the negligence on the part of the police, to give you warning, and to consider what means can be used . . . to avoid all unpleasantness."

Marianna listened to Pákhlin to the end.—She was not frightened—she even retained her composure. . . . But, as a matter of fact, was not it necessary to do something?—Her first impulse was to turn her eyes to Solómin.

He, also, appeared to be calm; only, around his lips the muscles were twitching slightly,—and he did not wear his habitual smile.

Solómin understood the significance of Marianna's glance: she was waiting to hear what he would say, that she might act in accordance therewith.

"It really is rather a ticklish piece of business," —he began; "I assume that it would not be a bad idea for Nezhdánoff to go into hiding for a time.—By the way, how did you come to know that he was here, Mr. Pákhlin?"

Pákhlin waved his hand.

"An individual told me. He saw him while he was roving about the neighbourhood, and haranguing.—Well, and he followed him, though not with any evil intentions.—He is one of the sympathisers. — Pardon me," — he added, addressing Marianna;—"but, really, our friend Nezhdánoff was very . . . . very imprudent."

"There is no use in blaming him now,"—began Solómin again.—"It is a pity that we cannot consult with him; but his indisposition will pass off by to-morrow,—and the police are not as rapid as you suppose. But you will have to go away, Marianna Vikéntievna, as well as he."

"Certainly,"—replied Marianna, in a dull but firm voice.

"Yes!"—said Solómin.—"We must think it over;—we must seek out the where and the how."

"Permit me to state my idea to you,"—began Pákhlin;—"this idea came into my head on my way hither. I hasten to remark, that I dismissed the cabman from town a verst from here."

"What is your idea?"—inquired Solómin.

"It is this.—Give me horses at once . . . and I will dash off to the Sipyágins."

"To the Sipyágins!"—repeated Marianna. . . . "Why?"

"You shall see."

"But do you know them?"

"Not the least bit in the world! But listen.—

Consider my idea well. It seems to me simply a stroke of genius.—You see, Markéloff is Sipyágin's brother-in-law, his wife's brother. Is n't that so? Is it possible that that gentleman will do nothing to save him? And, in addition—Nezhdánoff himself!—Let us assume that Mr. Sipyágin is angry with him. . . But, all the same, Nezhdánoff became his relative, by marrying you. And the danger which hangs over the head of your friend . . . ."

"I am not married,"—remarked Marianna.

Pákhlin actually shuddered.

"What! Have n't you managed it, in the course of all this time?—Well, never mind,"—he added,—"we can lie about it. It makes no difference. You will marry now?—Really, there is no other resource!—Pray note the fact that up to this time Sipyágin has not made up his mind to pursue you. Consequently, he has some . . . magnanimity . . . about him.—I perceive that that expression does not please you. Let us say: a certain amount of self-love. Why should not we profit by it, under the circumstances? Judge for yourself!"

Marianna raised her head, and passed her hand over her hair.

"You may take advantage of whatever you please, on behalf of Markéloff, Mr. Pákhlin . . . or for your own benefit; but Alexyéi and I desire neither the intercession nor the protection of Mr. Sipyágin. We did not leave his house for

the purpose of knocking at his door as petitioners. We have nothing to do with either the magnanimity or the self-love of Mr. Sipyágin or of his wife!"

"These are . . . very laudable sentiments," —replied Pákhlin—(and thought: "Curse you! you have douched me with cold water!")—"although, on the other hand, if you reflect. . . However, I am ready to submit. I will bestir myself on behalf of Markéloff, of our good Markéloff alone!—I will merely remark that he is related to him not by blood—but only through his wife—while you . . ."

"Mr. Pákhlin, I beg of you . . ."

"I obey . . . I obey!—Only, I cannot refrain from expressing my regret, because Sipyágin is a very powerful man."

"And have you no fears for yourself?"—asked Solómin.

Pákhlin protruded his chest.

"At such moments, it is not fitting that one should think of himself!"—he said proudly.—And, nevertheless, he was thinking precisely of himself.—He wanted (poor, weak creature!) to scamper off like a hare, as the expression is. By virtue of the service rendered, Sipyágin might, in case necessity should arise, speak a word for him. —For he had been mixed up in it! . . explain it away as you might,—he had heard . . . and he had even chattered!

"I think that your idea is not a bad one,"—re-

marked Solómin at last,—"although I cherish little hope of its actual success. In any case, you can make the effort. As for ruining matters—you cannot ruin them."

"Of course not!—Well—let us assume that the worst happens: that they pitch me out, neck and crop. . . Where 's the harm in that?"

"As a matter of fact, there is no harm at all in that . . . ." ("*Merci,*" thought Pákhlin—but Solómin went on:)—"What o'clock is it?—Five. There is no time to be lost. You shall have horses immediately. Pável!"

But instead of Pável, Nezhdánoff made his appearance on the threshold.—He staggered on his feet, and clung with one hand to the jamb of the door,—and, with lips feebly parted, he stared at them with a troubled gaze. He understood nothing.

Pákhlin was the first to approach him.

"Alyósha!"—he exclaimed:—"thou knowest me, dost thou not?"

Nezhdánoff stared at him, winking slowly:

"Pákhlin?"—he said at last.

"Yes, yes: it is I. Thou art not well?"

"No . . . I am not well. But . . . . why art thou here?"

"Why am I. . ." But at that moment Marianna gently nudged Pákhlin with her elbow. He glanced round—and saw that she was making signs to him. . . . "Akh, yes!"—he muttered.

—"Yes . . . exactly so! Why, seest thou, Alyósha,"—he added aloud,—"I came hither on an important matter—and am going on further at once.—Solómin will tell thee all—so will Marianna . . . . Marianna Vikéntievna.—Both of them entirely approve of my plan.—The matter concerns all of us:—that is to say, no, no,"—he caught himself up, in reply to a glance and a gesture from Marianna. . . . "The matter concerns Markéloff; our mutual friend, Markéloff;—him alone. But now, good-bye! Every minute is precious,—good-bye, my friend. . . We shall meet again.—Vasíly Feodótitch, will you come with me to make arrangements about the horses?"

"Certainly.—Marianna, I had intended to say to you: Be firm! But it is not necessary.—You are—the genuine thing!"

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!"—chimed in Pákhlin.—"You are a Roman woman of the time of Cato; Cato of Utica! But come along, Vasíly Feodótitch,—come along!"

"There is plenty of time,"—said Solómin, with a lazy smile. Nezhdánoff moved aside a little, in order to let them both pass. . . But there was the same lack of comprehension as before in his eyes. Then he advanced a couple of paces,—and seated himself softly on a chair, facing Marianna.

"Alexyéi,"—she said to him:—"everything has been discovered; Markéloff has been seized by the peasants, whom he had been trying to in-

cite to rebellion; he is sitting under arrest in the town, as well as that merchant with whom thou hast dined; probably the police will soon come for thee also.—And Pákhlin has gone off to Sipyágin."

"Why?"—whispered Nezhdánoff, in a barely audible voice. But his eyes lighted up—his face assumed its ordinary expression. His intoxication instantly left him.

"In order to try to get him to intercede."

Nezhdánoff drew himself up. . . "For us?"

"No; for Markéloff. He wanted to ask on our behalf also . . . but I would not permit it. —Have I done well, Alexyéi?"

"Hast thou done well?"—said Nezhdánoff, and, without rising from his chair, he stretched out his arms toward her.—"Hast thou done well?"—he repeated—and, drawing her to him, and pressing his face to her form, he suddenly burst into tears.

"What ails thee? What is the matter with thee?"—exclaimed Marianna.—As on the occasion when he had fallen on his knees before her, swooning and panting in a sudden fit of passion, so now, also, she laid both her hands on his throbbing head.—But what she felt now was something entirely different from what she had felt then.—Then she had surrendered herself to him —she had submitted, and only waited to hear what he would say to her.—Now she pitied him—

and thought only of how she might soothe him.

"What is the matter with thee?"—she repeated.—"Why dost thou weep? Can it be because thou hast come home in a somewhat . . . . strange condition? It cannot be!—Or art thou sorry for Markéloff—and alarmed for me, and for thyself? But thou wert not expecting that all this would proceed as though it were oiled!"

Nezhdánoff suddenly raised his head.

"No, Marianna,"—he said, as though breaking off his sobs:—"I am not alarmed either for thee or for myself. . . But, the truth is . . . I am sorry . . . ."

"For whom?"

"For thee, Marianna! I am sorry that thou hast united thy fate with that of a man who is not worthy of it."

"How so?"

"Why, at least, because that man can weep at such a moment!"

"It is not thou who art weeping: it is thy nerves!"

"My nerves and I—are all one! Come, listen, Marianna; look me in the eye: canst thou tell me now that thou dost not repent . . . ."

"Of what?"

"Of having eloped with me."

"No!"

"And thou wilt go further with me? Everywhere?"

"Yes!"

"Yes? Marianna . . . yes?"

"Yes. I have given thee my hand, and so long as thou shalt remain the man whom I have loved —I will not take it away."

Nezhdánoff remained seated in his chair. Marianna stood in front of him. His arms encircled her waist; her hands rested on his shoulders.— "Yes," "no"—thought Nezhdánoff . . . "but formerly, when I chanced to hold her in my arms, —as now,—her body remained motionless, at least, but now, I feel it is softly, and—perhaps against her will—withdrawing from me!"

He unclasped his arms. . . And, in fact, Marianna had perceptibly retreated.

"See here!"—he said aloud.—"If we must flee . . . before the police have caught us . . . I think it would not be a bad idea for us to get married first. I do not believe we shall find so obliging a priest as Zosíma anywhere else!"

"I am ready,"—said Marianna.

Nezhdánoff gazed attentively at her.

"A Roman woman!"—he said, with an unpleasant half-smile.—"A sense of duty!"

Marianna shrugged one shoulder.

"We must tell Solómin."

"Yes . . . . Solómin . . . ." drawled Nezhdánoff.—"But danger must threaten him, also,

I think. The police will seize him also.—It strikes me that he has taken a greater share and has known more than I have."

"I know nothing about that,"—replied Marianna.—"He never talks of himself."

"That 's not like me!" thought Nezhdánoff.—"That is what she meant to say."—"Solómin . . . Solómin!"—he added, after a prolonged pause.—"See here, Marianna, I would not pity thee if the man to whom thou hast united thy life forever—were such an one as Solómin . . . or were Solómin himself."

Marianna, in her turn, gazed attentively at Nezhdánoff.

"Thou hadst no right to say that,"—she said at last.

"I had no right!—In what sense am I to understand these words? In the sense that thou lovest me—or in the sense that I ought not to touch upon that subject in general!"

"Thou hadst not the right,"—repeated Marianna.

Nezhdánoff hung his head.

"Marianna!"—he ejaculated, in a changed voice.

"What?"

"If now . . . what if I were now to put to thee that question, which thou knowest? . . . . No, I will ask thee nothing . . . . farewell!"

He rose and left the room; Marianna did not

detain him. Nezhdánoff sat down on the divan, and covered his face with his hands. He was frightened at his own thoughts, and tried not to think.—He was conscious of one thing: some dark, subterranean hand had laid hold of the very root of his being—and would never more release him. He knew that that fine, precious creature, who had remained in the adjoining room, would not come forth to him;—and go in to her, he dared not. And to what end? What had he to say?

Swift, firm footsteps made him open his eyes. —Solómin passed through his room, and after knocking at Marianna's door, he entered.

"Honour and place!"—said Nezhdánoff, in a bitter whisper.

## XXXIV

It was already ten o'clock in the evening, and in the drawing-room, at the village of Arzhánoe, Sipyágin, his wife, and Kallomyeítzeff were playing cards, when a footman entered and announced the arrival of a stranger, a Mr. Pákhlin, who wished to see Borís Andréitch on the most pressing and important business.

"So late!"—remarked Valentína Mikhaílovna in surprise.

"What?" — asked Borís Andréitch, — and wrinkled his handsome nose.—"What didst thou say that gentleman's name is?"

"He said: Pákhlin, sir."

"Pákhlin!"—exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff. "A regular rustic name.—Pákhlin . . . . Solómin . . . . *De vrais noms ruraux, bien?*"[1]

"And thou sayest,"—pursued Borís Andréitch, turning to the lackey, with his nose still wrinkled up,—"that his business is important, pressing?"

"So he says, sir."

"H'm. . . . Some beggar or intriguer."—("Or both combined"—interjected Kallomyeí-

[1] Pákhlin comes from the word *tow;* Solómin from *straw.*—Translator.

tzeff.)—"Very possibly. Show him into my study."—Borís Andréitch rose.

"*Pardon, ma bonne.*—Please play écarté in the meantime.—Or wait for me. . . . I will be back shortly."

"*Nous causerons . . . allez!*" said Kallomyeítzeff.

When Sipyágin entered his study, and beheld the wretched, puny little form of Pákhlin, which was submissively clinging to the wall, in the interval between the chimney and the door,—he was overpowered by the truly Ministerial sentiment of haughty compassion, and fastidious condescension, which are so genuinely characteristic of Petersburg dignitaries.—"Oh, Lord! What an unfortunate, puny wretch!"—he thought; "and he seems to be lame, to boot!"

"Sit down,"—he said aloud, bringing into play his affable, barytone notes, with an agreeable backward twitch of his head, held well in the air—and seating himself in advance of his visitor.—"You are weary with your journey, I suppose: sit down, and explain yourself. What is the important business which has brought you to me at so late an hour?"

"Your excellency, I,"—began Pákhlin, cautiously letting himself down into an arm-chair,—"have permitted myself to present myself to you . . . ."

"Wait a bit, wait a bit,"—Sipyágin inter-

rupted him.—"I have seen you before. I never forget a single face with which I chance to come in contact; I remember everything.—A . . . a . . . a . . . where . . . precisely, was it, that I met you?"

"You are not mistaken, your excellency.—I have had the honour of meeting you in Petersburg, at the house of a man, who . . . . who, since that time . . . has, unhappily, . . aroused your wrath. . . ."

Sipyágin hastily rose from his chair.

"At Mr. Nezhdánoff's! I remember now. —It cannot be that you have come from him?"

"Not at all, your excellency; on the contrary . . . I . . . ."

Sipyágin sat down again.

"And you have done well. For, in that case, I would have asked you to withdraw at once.—I cannot tolerate any mediator between myself and Mr. Nezhdánoff. Mr. Nezhdánoff has dealt me one of those affronts which cannot be forgotten. . . . I am above revenge;—but I do not wish to hear anything about either him or about that young girl—who is, however, more depraved in mind than in heart" (this phrase Sipyágin was repeating now for about the thirtieth time since Marianna's flight) — "who brought herself to abandon the protection of the home which had sheltered her in order to become the mistress of a

swindler without any relatives!—It suffices to say of them, that I forget them!"

At this last word, Sipyágin turned his wrist away from him, from below upward.

"I forget them, my dear sir!"

"Your excellency, I have just stated to you, that I have not presented myself here on their behalf;—although, I may, nevertheless, inform your excellency, that they are already united in the bonds of legal marriage. . . . ."

("Ah! it makes no difference!" thought Pákhlin: "I said that I would lie . . and I have lied. Let it go at that!")

Sipyágin wriggled the nape of his neck against the back of the chair, to right and left.

"That does not interest me in the least, my dear sir.—There is one foolish marriage more in the world—that is all.—But what is that extremely pressing business to which I am indebted for the pleasure of your visit?"

"Ah! cursed director of a department!" thought Pákhlin again.—"Stop your airs, you English snout!"

"Your wife's brother,"—he said aloud,—"Mr. Markéloff,—has been seized by the peasants, whom he had taken it into his head to stir up to rebellion—and is locked up in the Governor's house."

Sipyágin sprang to his feet for the second time.

"What . . . what did you say?"—he stam-

mered, no longer in his Ministerial barytone,—but anyhow, in a sort of vile guttural voice.

"I said that your brother-in-law has been seized, and is sitting in chains.—As soon as I heard about it, I got horses, and drove hither to inform you. I assumed that thereby I might be rendering a service, both to you, and to the unfortunate man, whom you may be able to save!"

"I am very grateful to you,"—said Sipyágin, in the same feeble voice as before—and with a flourish, he brought his hand down upon a bell, in the form of a mushroom, and filled the whole house with the metallic ring of its steely tones.—"I am very grateful to you,"—he repeated, more sharply this time;—"but you must know that a man who has made up his mind to trample all laws, divine and human, under foot, be he a hundredfold my relative,—is not an unfortunate in my eyes: he is—a criminal!"

A footman rushed into the study.

"You are pleased to order?"

"A carriage! A carriage and four, this very moment!—I am going to town.—Philípp and Stepán are to go with me!"—The footman flew out.—"Yes, sir, my brother-in-law is a criminal; and I am going to town, not with the object of saving him!—Oh, no!"

"But, your excellency . . . . ."

"Such are my principles, my dear sir.—And

I beg that you will not annoy me with your objections!"

Sipyágin took to striding up and down the study,—and Pákhlin's eyes fairly started out of their sockets.—"Whew, the devil!" he thought: —"why, people have said of thee that thou wert a liberal!—But thou art a roaring lion!"

The door flew open, and with hasty steps there entered, first, Valentína Mikhaílovna,—and after her, Kallomyeítzeff.

"What is the meaning of this, Borís? thou hast ordered a carriage to be harnessed? Thou art going to town? what has happened?"

Sipyágin stepped up to his wife—and grasped her by the arm, between the elbow and the wrist. —"*Il faut vous armer de courage, ma chère.*— Your brother has been arrested."

"My brother? Seryózha? What for?"

"He has been preaching socialistic theories to the peasants"—(Kallomyeítzeff uttered a faint squeak). "Yes! He has been preaching revolution to them, he has been making propaganda! They have seized him—and handed him over to the authorities.—Now he is sitting . . in the town."

"The madman! But who has told you this?"

"This gentleman, here . . . Mr. . . . what the deuce is his name? . . . Mr. Konopátin[1] brought the news."

[1] *Konopdt*—oakum, tow.—TRANSLATOR.

Valentína Mikhaílovna glanced at Pákhlin. The latter made her a dejected bow.

("What a distinguished woman!"—he said to himself.—Even in such difficult moments . . . akh, how susceptible Pákhlin was to the influence of feminine beauty!)

"And thou wilt go to town—so late?"

"I shall still find the Governor up."

"I have always predicted that it must end in this way," — interposed Kallomyeítzeff. "It could not be otherwise!—But what splendid fellows our Russian peasants are!—Marvellous!—Pardon, madame, *c'est votre frère! Mais la vérité avant tout!*"

"Dost thou really mean to go, Bórya?"—asked Valentína Mikhaílovna.

"I am convinced,"—pursued Kallomyeítzeff, "that that fellow also, that teacher, Mr. Nezhdánoff, is mixed up in this.—*J'en mettrais ma main au feu.*—They all belong to the same gang! Have n't they seized him? Don't you know?"

Again Sipyágin gave his wrist a twist.

"I do not know—and I do not wish to know! By the way,"—he added, addressing his wife,—"*il paraît qu'ils sont mariés.*"

"Who says so? That same gentleman?"—Valentína Mikhaílovna again cast a look at Pákhlin, but this time she screwed up her eyes.

"Yes, that gentleman."

"In that case,"—put in Kallomyeítzeff,—"he

certainly knows where they are.—Do you know where they are? Do you know where they are? Hey? Hey? Hey? Do you know?"—Kallomyeítzeff began to skip to and fro, in front of Pákhlin, as though desirous of barring his road, although the latter had evinced not the faintest inclination to run away.—"Come, speak! Answer! Hey? Hey? Do you know? Do you know?"

"Even if I did know,"—articulated Pákhlin, irritably,—his bile was beginning to work, and his small eyes were beginning to flash:—"even if I did know, I would n't tell you."

"Oh . . . oh . . . oh,"—muttered Kallomyeítzeff. "Do you hear that! . . Do you hear that!—And this fellow also—this fellow also must be one of their band!"

"The carriage is ready!" bawled the footman, entering.

Sipyágin seized his hat, with a fine, dashing gesture;—but Valentína Mikhaílovna began so insistently to entreat him to remain until the next morning, she presented to him such convincing arguments: it was night outside, and everybody would be asleep in town, and he would only upset his nerves, and might catch cold,—that Sipyágin at last agreed with her, and exclaimed:

"I surrender!"—and with a gesture as fine, but no longer as dashing, he put his hat on the table.

"Unharness the carriage!"—he ordered the footman;—"but let it be ready to-morrow promptly at six o'clock in the morning! Dost thou hear?—Go!—Stop!—Dismiss the equipage of Mr. . . . of our visitor! Pay the cabman!—hey? I think you made some remark, Mr. Konopátin!—I will take you with me to-morrow, Mr. Konopátin!—What do you say? I cannot hear. . . You drink vodka, I suppose?—Bring some vodka for Mr. Konopátin!—No? You do not drink?—In that case . . . . Feódor! Show him to the green chamber!—Good night, Mr. Kono . . . ."

Pákhlin lost patience at last.

"Pákhlin!"—he vociferated.—"My name is Pákhlin!"

"Yes . . . yes; well, it 's all the same.—Very much alike, you know. But what a loud voice you have, for your spare build!—Farewell until to-morrow, Mr. Pákhlin. . . *Did* I say it right that time? *Siméon, vous viendrez avec nous?*"

"*Je crois bien!*"

And Pákhlin was conducted to the green chamber. And they even locked him in. As he got into bed, he heard the key click in the English lock.—He cursed himself vigorously for his "inspired" idea—and slept very badly.

On the following morning, at half-past six, they came and waked him. Coffee was served to him; while he was drinking it, the footman, with

a variegated shoulder-knot on one shoulder, waited, holding the tray in his hands, and shifting from one foot to the other, as much as to say: "Hurry up there—the gentlemen are waiting." Then he was escorted down-stairs. The carriage was already standing in front of the house.—Kallomyeítzeff's calash was standing there also. Sipyágin made his appearance on the porch, in a camlet cloak, with a circular cape. No one had worn cloaks of that pattern for a long time past, with the exception of one dignitary of very high degree, to whom Sipyágin tried to be obsequious, and whom he imitated. Therefore on important, official occasions he donned a similar cloak.

Sipyágin made Pákhlin a fairly courteous bow—and indicating the carriage to him with an energetic gesture of the hand, he requested him to seat himself in it.—"Mr. Pákhlin, you are to drive with me, Mr. Pákhlin! Put Mr. Pákhlin's travelling-bag on the box! I shall take Mr. Pákhlin"—he said, emphasising the word Pákhlin, and the letter *a*. As much as to say: "Thou hast such an appellation, and yet takest offence when I alter it?—So, take that! Taste it! Choke yourself!"—Mr. Pákhlin! Pákhlin!! The ill-starred name echoed sonorously through the cool morning air. It was so cool, that it made Kallomyeítzeff, who came out behind Sipyágin, ejaculate several times, in French: "Brrr! brrr! brrr!"—and wrap himself more snugly in his

cloak, as he took his seat, in his dandified calash, with its top thrown back.—(His poor friend, Prince Mikhaíl Obrenóvitch, of Servia, after having seen it, had purchased one exactly like it for himself, of Binder. . . . . *"Vous savez, Binder, le grand carrossier des Champs-Élysées?"*) From behind the half-opened shutters of her bedroom, Valentína Mikhaílovna was peeping out, "in cap, in night-kerchief."

Sipyágin, as he took his seat, threw her a kiss.

"Are you comfortable, Mr. Pákhlin? Drive on!"

*"Je vous recommande mon frère, épargnez-le"*—Valentína Mikhaílovna's voice made itself heard.

*"Soyez tranquille!"*—cried Kallomyeítzeff, with a daring glance at her from beneath the rim of some sort of a travelling-cap with a cockade, of his own concoction. . . *"C'est surtout l'autre qu'il faut pincer!"*

"Drive on!"—repeated Sipyágin.—"You are not cold, Mr. Pákhlin?—Drive on!"

The carriages drove off.

For the first ten minutes, both Sipyágin and Pákhlin maintained silence.—The unlucky Sílushka, in his paltry little coat and well-worn cap, seemed more miserable than ever against the dark-blue background of rich silken material with which the interior of the carriage was upholstered. He scrutinised his surroundings in silence,—the

delicate sky-blue shades, which rolled up quickly at the mere pressure of a finger on the spring, and the strip of the softest white lamb's-wool under their feet,—and the mahogany case, fastened in front, with a movable cover, for letters, and even little shelves for books—(it was not so much that Borís Andréitch was fond of working in his carriage, as that he wished to have other people think that he was, like Thiers, while travelling). Pákhlin quailed. Sipyágin cast a couple of glances at him, over his cheek, which was shaved until it shone—and, with deliberate dignity drawing from his side-pocket a silver cigar-case with a curly monogram in Slavonic script—offered . . . . actually offered him a cigar, barely holding it between the second and third fingers of his hand, endued in a yellow English glove of dogskin.

"I do not smoke,"—muttered Pákhlin.

"Ah!"—responded Sipyágin, and himself lighted the cigar, which proved to be a superb regalia.

"I am bound to tell you . . . my dear Mr. Pákhlin,"—he began, as he affably puffed away at his cigar, and emitted circular clouds of fragrant smoke . . . . "that I . . . really . . . am extremely . . . . grateful . . . to you. . . . I may have appeared to you . . . . last night . . . a trifle harsh . . . . which is not in my . . . . character." (Sipyágin split his speech up irregularly with deliberate intent.)

"I venture to give you this assurance.—But, Mr. Pákhlin, just put yourself in my place."—(Sipyágin rolled his cigar from one side of his mouth to the other.)—"The position which I occupy brings me . . . so to speak . . . into prominence; and, all of a sudden . . . my wife's brother—compromises both himself . . . . and me in such an incredible manner! Hey? Mr. Pákhlin!—Perhaps you think that is of no consequence?"

"I do not think that, your excellency."

"You do not know on what charge . . . and precisely where, they arrested him?"

"I heard that it was in the T. . . . district."

"From whom did you hear it?"

"From . . . from a man."

"Of course, it was not from a bird.—But from what sort of a man?"

"From . . . from an assistant of the business manager in the Governor's chancellery. . . ."

"What is his name?"

"The manager's?"

"No, his assistant's."

"His name . . his name is Ulyashévitch. He is a very fine official, your excellency.—On learning of this occurrence, I immediately hastened to you."

"Well, yes, well, yes!—And I repeat that I am extremely obliged to you.—But what madness!—It is madness, is it not? Hey? Mr. Pákhlin? Hey?"

"Perfect madness!"—exclaimed Pákhlin—and the sweat coursed down his back like a warm snake.—"That is what comes,"—he went on,—"of not understanding the Russian peasant.—Mr. Markéloff, so far as I am acquainted with him, has a very kind and noble heart:—but he never has understood the Russian peasant." (Pákhlin darted a glance at Sipyágin, who, slightly turning toward him, was enveloping him with a cold, though not a hostile gaze.)

"The Russian peasant cannot even be drawn into revolt otherwise than by taking advantage of his loyalty to the highest authority, to the Imperial House. Some sort of a legend must be invented—recall Dmítry the Pretender;—some imperial tokens must be exhibited on the breast, burnt in with heated five-kopék coins."

"Yes, yes, like Pugatchyóff,"—interrupted Sipyágin, in the sort of tone which seemed to say:—"We have n't forgotten our history yet . . . don't describe it!"—and adding:—"This is madness! this is madness!"—he became engrossed in contemplation of the brisk stream of smoke which was rising from the tip of his cigar.

"Your excellency!"—remarked Pákhlin, summoning up his courage:—"I told you awhile ago that I did not smoke . . . but that is not true—I do smoke; and your cigar is so ravishingly fragrant . . . ."

"Hey? What? What 's that?"—said Si-

pyágin, seeming to wake out of a doze;—and, without giving Pákhlin a chance to repeat what he had said, thereby conclusively proving that he had heard his words perfectly well, but had put the reiterated questions merely for the sake of showing his importance,—he held out his open cigar-case.

Pákhlin cautiously and gratefully began to smoke.

"Here 's a convenient moment, apparently," he thought; but Sipyágin forestalled him.

"I remember that you said to me, also,"—he articulated, in a careless voice, interrupting himself, inspecting his cigar, pulling his hat from the back of his head over his brow:—"that you said . . . hey? you said something about . . . . about your friend, who has married my . . . . relative. —Are you in the habit of seeing them?—Have they settled down near here?"

"Ehe!" thought Pákhlin,—"he 's a strong one, beware!"

"I have seen them only once, your excellency! They are living, in fact . . . not so very far from here."

"You understand, of course,"—went on Sipyágin, in the same manner,—"that I can no longer take a serious interest, as I have already explained to you,—either in that giddy young girl, or in your friend.—Good heavens! I have no prejudices, but you surely must agree that

this is altogether too much.—It is stupid, you know; however, I assume that what brought them together is politics" . . . . ("politics! !"—he repeated, and shrugged his shoulders)—"rather than any other feeling."

"And I assume the same thing, your excellency!"

"Yes, Mr. Nezhdánoff was a regular Red.—I will do him the justice to say that he did not conceal his opinions from me."

"Nezhdánoff,"—risked Pákhlin,—"may have got led astray; but his heart . . ."

"Is good,"—interposed Sipyágin; "of course . . . of course, so is Markéloff's.—They all have good hearts.—Probably he took part also,—and will also be drawn into it. . . . I must intercede for him also!"

Pákhlin clasped his hands across his breast.—"Akh, yes, yes, your excellency!—Show him your protection! Really . . . he is worthy . . . worthy of your sympathy."

Sipyágin grinned.

"Do you think so?"

"In short, if not for him, at least for your niece; for his wife!"—("My God! My God!"—thought Pákhlin,—"how I am lying!")

Sipyágin knit his brows.

"You are a very devoted friend, I perceive. That is good; that is praiseworthy, young man.—So they are living near here, you say!"

"Yes, your excellency; in a large establishment. . ." Here Pákhlin bit his tongue.

"Te, te, te, te . . . with Solómin! so that's where they are!—But I was aware of that; I had heard of that—I had been told. . . Yes." —(Mr. Sipyágin had known nothing of the sort, and no one had told him any such thing; but, calling to mind Solómin's visit, their nocturnal meetings, he had cast that bait. . . And Pákhlin had immediately made a dash for it.)

"If you know it,"—he began, and again he bit his tongue. . . . But it was already too late. . . From the glance alone which Sipyágin darted at him he comprehended that the latter had been playing with him, all the while, as a cat plays with a mouse.

"But, your excellency," — faltered the unhappy man:—"I am bound to say that I really know nothing. . ."

"But I am not interrogating you, good gracious! What do you mean?—For what do you take me and yourself?"—said Sipyágin haughtily.—And immediately mounted his Ministerial heights.

And again Pákhlin felt that he was paltry, small, trapped. . . Up to that moment, as he smoked, he had placed his cigar in the corner of his mouth away from Sipyágin, and had emitted his smoke softly, to one side; at this point, he took

it out of his mouth altogether, and ceased to smoke.

"My God!"—he groaned inwardly—and the boiling sweat streamed down his limbs in still greater abundance than before.—"What have I done!—I have betrayed everything and everybody. . . I have been fooled, I have been bought with a good cigar!! . . . I am an informer . . . and how can I remedy the mischief now? O Lord!"

There was no remedy for the mischief.—Sipyágin began to doze in a dignified, important way, also like a Minister, enveloped in his "stately" cloak. . . . And before another quarter of an hour had elapsed, both equipages drew up before the Governor's house.

## XXXV

THE Governor of the town of S.... belonged to the category of good-natured, indolent, fashionable generals—generals who are endowed with a wonderfully well-washed white body, and a soul almost equally clean—thoroughbreds, well educated, and, so to speak, made of the finest wheaten flour, generals who, though they have never prepared themselves to be "shepherds of the people," display, notwithstanding, very respectable administrative ability—and, while they work little, and sigh incessantly for Petersburg, and run after pretty provincial women, are of indubitable utility to the special government, and leave a good memory behind them.—He had only just got out of bed—and, seated in front of his toilet-table, in a silk dressing-gown, and a night-shirt open on the breast, he was engaged in rubbing, with eau de cologne and water, his face and his neck, from which last he had, as a preliminary, removed a whole collection of small images and amulets,—when the arrival of Sipyágin and Kallomyeítzeff, on important and pressing business, was announced to him.—With Sipyágin he was very intimate and they addressed each other as "thou,"

—they had known each other since childhood, and had constantly encountered each other in the drawing-rooms of Petersburg—and of late he had begun mentally to add to his name, every time that it entered his mind—a respectful "Ah!"—as to the name of a future dignitary. With Kallomyeítzeff he was somewhat less well acquainted, as "unpleasant" complaints had begun to come in with regard to him for some time past; nevertheless, he regarded him as a man—*qui fera chemin*—in one way or another.

He gave orders that his visitors should be requested to be so good as to come to his study—and instantly went to them, in his silk dressing-gown, without even making an apology for receiving them in such an unofficial attire—and shook hands with them in friendly fashion.—But only Sipyágin and Kallomyeítzeff entered the Governor's study; Pákhlin remained in the drawing-room. On alighting from the carriage, he had attempted to slip away, murmuring that he had business at home; but Sipyágin, with courteous firmness, detained him,—(Kallomyeítzeff had rushed up, and whispered in Sipyágin's ear: "*Ne le lâchez pas! Tonnerre de tonnerres!*") and had taken him along with him. But he did not take him into the study, and requested him —with the same courteous firmness—to remain in the drawing-room until he should be summoned. —Even then, Pákhlin had hopes of making his

escape . . . but a sturdy gendarme made his appearance at the door, in response to Kallomyeítzeff's warning. . . . Pákhlin remained.

"Thou assuredly must guess what has brought me to thee, *Voldemar?*"—began Sipyágin.

"No, my dear soul, I cannot guess,"—replied the amiable epicurean,—while an affable smile rounded his rosy cheeks, and displayed his brilliant teeth, half-veiled in a silky moustache.

"What? . . . But about Markéloff, thou knowest?"

"What is Markéloff?"—repeated the Governor, with the same aspect as before.

In the first place, he did not clearly recall that the man who had been arrested the day before was named Markéloff;—and, in the second place, he had totally forgotten that Sipyágin's wife had a brother who bore that name.—"But why dost thou stand, Borís?—sit down; wilt thou not have some tea?"

But Sipyágin was in no mood for tea.

When he had at last explained the state of the case, and for what reason he and Kallomyeítzeff had come, the Governor uttered a grieved exclamation, smote his brow, and his face assumed a melancholy expression.

"Yes . . . yes . . . yes!"—he repeated:—"what a calamity! And he is sitting there, in my house—to-day—for the time being! Thou know-

est, we never keep *that sort* with us more than one night; but the chief of the gendarmes is not in town: so thy brother-in-law has got stranded. . . But he will be transferred to-morrow. My God, how disagreeable!—How grieved thy wife must be!! What is it thou desirest?"

"I should like to see him here, in thy presence, if it is not contrary to the law."

"Goodness, my dear fellow!—the law was not written for such people as thou.—I feel *so* much sympathy for thee. . . . *C'est affreux, tu sais!*"

He rang in a special manner. An adjutant made his appearance.

"My dear Baron, please take the proper measures."—He told him what to do, and how to do it. The baron disappeared.—"*Imagine, mon cher ami:* the peasants almost murdered him. Hands bound behind him, in a peasant-cart—and—forward, march!—And he, just fancy!—is not a bit angry with them—and is not indignant, upon my word, he is not! And, altogether, he is so composed. . . I was amazed! but here, thou wilt see for thyself.—*C'est un fanatique tranquille.*"

"*Ce sont les pires,*"—remarked Kallomyeítzeff sententiously.

The Governor cast a sidelong glance at him.

"By the way, I must have a talk with you, Semyón Petróvitch."

"Why?"

"Why, because; it 's a bad business."

"What, in particular?"

"Why, you know, your creditor, that peasant, who came to me to complain . . ."

"Well?"

"He has hung himself, you know."

"When?"

"It makes no difference when;—but it 's a bad business."

Kallomyeítzeff shrugged his shoulders, and walked off to the window, with a dandified, swaying gait. At that moment the adjutant led in Markéloff.

The Governor had told the truth about him: he was unnaturally composed.—Even his habitual moroseness had vanished from his face, and had been supplanted by an expression of a sort of indifferent weariness. It did not change when he caught sight of his brother-in-law; and only in the glance which he darted at the German adjutant who had brought him in did a momentary remnant of his ancient hatred for that sort of people flash forth.—His coat had been torn in two places, and hastily sewn together with coarse thread; small scratches, with the blood dried on them, were visible on his forehead, above his eyebrow, and on the bridge of his nose.—He had not washed, but he had combed his hair. Thrusting both his wrists deeply into his sleeves, he halted not far from the door. . He breathed evenly.

"Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch!"—began Sipyágin in an agitated tone, stepping up to within a couple of paces of him, and extending his right hand sufficiently to enable it to touch—or to stop him, if he made a movement in advance,—"Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch! I have come hither not merely for the purpose of expressing to thee our amazement, our profound grief; as to that, thou canst have no doubt!—Thou thyself *hast determined* to ruin thyself! And thou hast done it!—But I wished to see thee, in order to tell thee . . eh . . . eh . . . in order to give . . . in order to render it possible for thee to listen to the voice of reason, of honour, and of friendship! Thou mayest still lighten thy fate; and, believe me, I—I, on my side, will do everything in my power!—the respected chief of our local government here will confirm this to thee."—Here Sipyágin raised his voice:—"Sincere repentance of thy errors, a full confession, without any concealment, which will be presented in the proper quarter . . . ."

"Your excellency,"—said Markéloff suddenly, turning to the Governor,—and even the sound of his voice was calm, although a little hoarse: "I supposed that you wished to see me—and to examine me again, perhaps. . . But if you have summoned me hither solely at the desire of Mr. Sipyágin, then be so good as to give orders to have me taken away: we cannot understand

each other.—Everything he says is all Latin to me."

"Permit me . . . Latin!"—interposed Kallomyeítzeff, superciliously and shrilly:—"and is this Latin, to stir the peasants to revolt?—Is that Latin? Hey? Is that Latin?"

"Pray, your excellency, is this your official of the secret police? Such a zealous fellow?"—inquired Markéloff—and a faint smile of satisfaction touched his pallid lips.

Kallomyeítzeff began to hiss and stamp his feet. . . . But the Governor stopped him.

"It is your own fault, Semyón Petróvitch. Why do you meddle with what does not concern you?"

"With what does not concern me . . . with what does not concern me! . . . It strikes me that this is everybody's business—the business of all of us nobles. . ."

Markéloff surveyed Kallomyeítzeff from head to foot with a cold, deliberate stare,—as though with a final gaze,—and turned a little toward Sipyágin.

"But if you, my dear brother-in-law, wish to have me explain my ideas to you—here you have them: I admit that the peasants had a right to arrest me, and surrender me, if what I said to them did not please them.—They were free to do it.—I went to them; they did not come to me.—And the government,—if it sends me to Siberia

. . . I shall not repine—although I do not consider myself guilty. It is doing its duty, because it is protecting itself. . . Does this satisfy you?"

Sipyágin threw his hands upward.

"Satisfy me!! What a word!—That is not the question—and it is not for us to judge how the government will act; but what I want to know is, do you feel—dost *thou* feel—Sergyéi" —(Sipyágin had made up his mind to play upon the heart-strings)—"the imprudence, the madness of thy undertaking, art thou ready to prove thy *penitence* by deeds, and can I stand surety —stand surety, to a certain extent,—for thee, Sergyéi?"

Markéloff contracted his thick eyebrows.

"I have said my say—and I will not repeat it."

"But repentance? Where is thy repentance?"

Markéloff's patience suddenly gave way.

"Akh, let me alone with your 'repentance'! Do you want to force yourself into my very soul? Leave that, at least, to me."

Sipyágin shrugged his shoulders.

"There now, that is just like thee; thou wilt not heed the voice of wisdom! Thou art offered the possibility of getting out of thy scrape quietly, nobly . . ."

"Quietly, nobly . . ." repeated Markéloff, surlily.—"We know all about those words! They are always used to a man when it is being

suggested to him that he shall commit a villainy. That 's what they signify, those words!"

"We pity you,"—Sipyágin continued to exhort Markéloff,—"but we do not hate you."

"A fine pity! Off with us to Siberia, to hard labour . . . that 's the way you show your pity for us! Akh, let me alone—let me alone, for God's sake!"

And Markéloff hung his head.

There was great confusion in his soul, calm as his outward aspect was. What pained and tortured him most of all was, that he had been betrayed,—and by whom! By Eremyéi of Goloplyótzk! That Eremyéi, in whom he had had such blind faith!—That Mendelyéi the "Porpoise" had not followed him really did not surprise him. . . . . Mendelyéi was drunk, and therefore was cowardly. But Eremyéi!! To Markéloff, Eremyéi was, as it were, the incarnation of the Russian people. . . And he had betrayed him!—So everything for which Markéloff had toiled, everything was wrong, was different?—And Kislyakóff had lied,—and Vasíly Nikoláevitch had been prating nonsense, and all those articles, books, compositions of the socialists, of the thinkers, every letter of which had seemed to him indubitable and impregnable, was all that—mere wind? Was it possible?—And that beautiful comparison of the ripening abscess, which was awaiting the thrust of the lancet—was it, also, a

mere phrase? "No! no!"—he whispered to himself, and athwart his bronzed cheek flitted a faint, brick-coloured flush: "No; it is all true; all . . but *I* am to blame, *I* was incapable, *I* did not say the right thing, did not set about it in the right way! —I ought simply to have given commands, and if any one attempted to interfere, to resist,—fire a bullet into his head! There is no need for going into details. Whoever is not with us has no right to live . . . spies are killed like dogs . . . worse than dogs!"

And the details of his capture presented themselves to Markéloff's mind. . . . At first, silence, mutual winks, shouts in the rear ranks. . . Then one man comes up on the side, makes a feint of bowing. Then that sudden tumult! Then he is thrown to the ground. . . . "My lads . . my lads . . what are you about?"—And they: "Give us a belt! Bind him! . . ." His bones crack . . . and impotent wrath . . . and the stinking dust in his mouth, in his nostrils. . . . "Drag him along, drag him along . . to throw him into the cart." Some one laughs thickly . . . fie!

"I did not set about it rightly—I did not set about it rightly. . . ."

This, in particular, it was that pained and tortured him; but that he had fallen under the wheels —that was his personal misfortune; it did not affect the cause in general,— it could be borne. . . But Eremyéi! Eremyéi!

While Markéloff stood there, with his head drooping on his breast, Sipyágin led the Governor aside, and began to talk to him in an undertone, throwing his hands a little way apart, playing a little tattoo on his forehead with his fingers, as though desirous of showing that that unfortunate man was not quite right in his mind, and, in general, endeavouring to arouse, if not sympathy, at least leniency toward the madman.—But the Governor shrugged his shoulders, now elevated, now closed his eyes, regretted his own powerlessness,—yet promised a little something. . . . . "*Tous les égards . . . certainement, tous les égards . . . .*" the words became audible, in a pleasing lisp, as they flowed softly through the perfumed moustache. . . . "But thou knowest, there is the law."—"Of course, there is the law!"—chimed in Sipyágin, with a certain stern submission.

While they were conversing in a corner, Kallomyeítzeff simply could not keep still in one place: he moved backward and forward, he smacked his lips slightly, he yawned, he exhibited all the signs of impatience. At last he approached Sipyágin, and said, hastily:

"*Vous oubliez l'autre!*"

"Ah, yes!"—said Sipyágin aloud.—"*Merci de me l'avoir rappelé.*—I must bring the following fact to the notice of your excellency,"—he said, turning to the Governor. . . . . (He addressed his friend *Voldemar* in this manner, for

the express purpose of not compromising his prestige, in the presence of the rebel.) "I have solid grounds for assuming that my *beau-frère's* crazy enterprise has several ramifications; and that one of those branches—that is to say, one of the suspected persons—is not very far from this town.—Order him to be brought in," he added, in a loud voice.—"Yonder, in thy drawing-room, there is a . . . I brought him hither."

The Governor, glancing at Sipyágin, said to himself, with respect: "What a man!"—and issued the order.—A minute later, the servant of God, Síla Pákhlin—stood before his eyes.

Síla Pákhlin began by making a low bow to the Governor; but, on catching sight of Markéloff, he did not finish his bow, and so remained, half-bent, twisting his cap in his hands.

"Is this the branch?"—inquired the Governor, pointing at Pákhlin with a large, white finger, adorned with a turquoise.

"Oh, no!"—replied Sipyágin, with a half-smile.—"However!"—he added, after a brief reflection.—"Here, your excellency,"—he began again, aloud,—"you have before you a certain Mr. Pákhlin. He is, so far as I am aware, a resident of Petersburg, and the intimate friend of a certain person who lived with me in the capacity of tutor, and fled from my house, taking with him,—I add this with a blush,—a young girl, a relative of mine."

"Ah! *oui, oui,*" murmured the Governor, and nodded his head, from above downward:—"I have heard something. . . The Countess told me. . . ."

Sipyágin raised his voice.

"This person is a certain Mr. Nezhdánoff, whom I strongly suspect of erroneous conceptions and theories. . . ."

"*Un rouge à tous crins,*"—put in Kallomyeítzeff. . . .

". . . . Of erroneous conceptions and theories,"—repeated Sipyágin with still greater distinctness,—"and, as a matter of course, not alien to this whole propaganda. He is hiding . . . so Mr. Pákhlin has told me,—in the factory of merchant Falyéeff. . . ."

At the words: "So Mr. Pákhlin has told me," Markéloff darted another glance at Pákhlin, but only smiled slowly and indifferently.

"Excuse me, excuse me, your excellency,"—shouted Pákhlin,—"and you, too, Mr. Sipyágin: I never . . . never . . . ."

"Of merchant Falyéeff, thou sayest?"—said the Governor to Sipyágin, merely wriggling his fingers in the direction of Pákhlin:—as much as to say:—"Be quiet, my good fellow, be quiet."—"What is going on with them, with our respected Big-beards? One was caught yesterday, also, in connection with this same affair. Perhaps thou hast heard his name: Golúshkin, a wealthy man.

Well, he will not get up a revolution. He is fairly crawling on his knees."

"Merchant Falyéeff has nothing whatever to do with this,"—said Sipyágin with great distinctness of enunciation.—"I am not acquainted with his views; I am merely referring to his factory, in which, according to Mr. Pákhlin's statements, Mr. Nezhdánoff is at the present moment."

"I did not say so!"—yelled Pákhlin again.—"It was *you* who said it!"

"Pardon me, Mr. Pákhlin,"—articulated Sipyágin, with the same pitilessly distinct enunciation as before.—"I respect that feeling of friendship which inspires your 'denegation.'" ("Whew . . . Guizot!" said the Governor to himself.) "But I shall take the liberty of not setting you up as an example for myself. Do you suppose that the sentiment of blood-relationship is not as strong in me as your sentiment of friendship?—But there is another feeling, my dear sir, which is still more powerful, and must guide our actions and our deeds: the feeling of duty!"

"*Le sentiment du devoir,*"—explained Kallomyeítzeff.

Markéloff surveyed both speakers from head to foot with a glance.

"Mr. Governor,"—said he,—"I repeat my request: please give orders to have me taken away from these gabblers."

But at this point the Governor lost patience a little.

"Mr. Markéloff!"—he exclaimed:—"I would advise you to exercise a little more control over your tongue, and more respect for your superiors . . . especially when they are expressing patriotic sentiments, like those which you have just heard from the mouth of your brother-in-law! —I shall consider myself fortunate, my dear Borís,"—added the Governor, addressing Sipyágin,—" in being able to bring your noble deeds to the knowledge of the Minister.—But with whom is that Mr. Nezhdánoff actually staying—at that factory?"

Sipyágin frowned.

"With a certain Mr. Solómin, the head mechanician there, as this same Mr. Pákhlin told me."

It appeared to afford Sipyágin particular satisfaction to torment poor Sílushka: he was now taking his revenge on him for the cigar which he had given him in the carriage, and for his familiarly-polite behaviour to him, and even playfulness with him.

"And that Solómin,"—chimed in Kallomyeítzeff,—" is an undoubted radical and republican, and it would not be a bad thing if your excellency were to turn your attention to him also."

"Do you know these . . . . gentlemen . . . Solómin . . . and, what's his name? and . . .

Nezhdánoff?"—the Governor asked Markéloff, in rather official fashion, through his nose.

Markéloff malevolently inflated his nostrils.

"And you, your excellency, do you know Confucius and Titus Livius?"

The Governor turned away..

"*Il n'y a pas moyen de causer avec cet homme,*"—he said, shrugging his shoulders.—"*Monsieur le Baron,* please come here."

The adjutant dashed up to him;—and Pákhlin, choosing his time, approached Sipyágin, hobbling and limping.

"What is this that you are doing,"—he whispered:—"why are you ruining your niece? For she is with him, with Nezhdánoff, you know!..."

"I am not ruining anybody, my dear sir,"—replied Sipyágin aloud:—"I am doing as my conscience bids me and . . . . ."

"And your wife, my sister, who has you under her thumb,"—interjected Markéloff in an equally audible voice.

Sipyágin, as the saying goes, did not even perceive his existence. So far beneath him was this!

"Listen,"—Pákhlin went on, in a whisper,—his whole body was quivering with excitement, and, possibly, with fear,—and his eyes were gleaming viciously, and the tears were rising in his throat,—tears of pity for *them,* and of vexation at himself;—"listen: I told you that she was married—it is not true—I lied to you!—

But that marriage was to take place, and if you interfere with it—if the police make their appearance there—there will be a stain on your conscience which you can never wash off, and you . . . ."

" The information communicated by you,"—interrupted Sipyágin, in a louder tone than ever,—" if it be correct, which I have the right to doubt, —the information can have no effect save to hasten those measures which I should have considered it necessary to take; and as for the purity of my conscience, I must request you, my dear sir, not to trouble yourself about that."

" It is polished smooth, brother,"—put in Markéloff again:—" it has been done over with Petersburg varnish; no liquid will take effect on it! But do thou, Mr. Pákhlin, whisper, whisper away, as much as thou wilt: thou canst not whisper thyself out of the scrape."

The Governor thought it necessary to put a stop to all these recriminations.—" I think, gentlemen,"—he began,—" that you have said quite enough—and therefore, my dear Baron, take Mr. Markéloff away. *N'est ce pas,* Borís, thou hast no further need of . . . ."

Sipyágin threw out his hands.

" I have said everything I could. . . ."

" Very good! . . . . My dear Baron! . . ."

The adjutant stepped up to Markéloff, clicked his spurs, made a horizontal gesture with his hand,

. . . as much as to say: "Come along, if you please!" Markéloff turned and left the room.—Pákhlin pressed his hand, mentally, it is true, but with bitter sympathy and compassion.

"And we will send our fine fellows to the factory,"—went on the Governor.—"Only, see here, Borís: it occurs to me—that gentleman"—(he indicated Pákhlin with his chin)—"gave thee a bit of information concerning thy relative. . . . To the effect, that she is yonder, at that factory. . . Then what is to be done? . . . ."

"She must not be arrested, in any case,"—remarked Sipyágin with profound thoughtfulness. "Perhaps she will come to her senses, and return home. I will write a note to her, if thou wilt permit."

"Pray do so. And, altogether, thou mayest feel assured. . . *Nous coffrerons le quidam . . . mais nous sommes galants avec les dames . . . et avec celle-là, donc!*"

"But you are making no arrangements with regard to that Solómin," plaintively exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, who had been pricking up his ears all the while, and trying to hear the Governor's little apart with Sipyágin.—"I assure you he is the chief ring-leader! I have a scent for such things . . . such a fine scent!"

"*Pas trop de zèle,* my dearest Semyón Petróvitch,"—remarked the Governor with a grin.—"Remember Talleyrand! If that is the fact, he

shall not escape us either! You would do better to meditate upon your . . . kkk . . k!"—And the Governor made a gesture of strangling about his throat. . . . "Yes, and by the way,"—he turned again to Sipyágin:—"*et ce gaillard—là!*"—(he again indicated Pákhlin with his chin).—"*Qu'en ferons nous?* He's not very alarming to look at."

"Release him,"—said Sipyágin softly, and added in German:—"*Lass' den Lumpen laufen!*"

For some reason or other, he had an idea that he was quoting from Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen."

"You may go, my dear sir!"—said the Governor aloud.—"We have no further use for you. Good-bye for the present!"

Pákhlin made a general salute, and went out into the street, thoroughly humiliated and crushed. O God! O God! this scorn had dealt him the final blow.

"What is this?"—he thought with inexpressible despair:—"Am I both a coward and an informer? But no . . . no: I am an honest man, gentleman,—and I am not yet stripped of all courage!"

But what familiar figure was that which was planted there, on the porch of the Governor's house, and regarding him with a melancholy gaze, filled with reproach? Why, it was—Markéloff's

aged servant. Evidently, he had come to the town for his master, and would not quit his prison. . . Only, why was he gazing like that at Pákhlin? For it was not he who had surrendered Markéloff!

"And why did I thrust myself into a business wherein I had no part or lot whatever?"—he pursued his despairing reflections.—"Why could n't I have sat quietly at home, in the shop?—But now they are saying, and, I suppose, writing also, that a certain Mr. Pákhlin told everything, betrayed them . . . his friends—betrayed them to their enemies!"—Here he recalled the glance flung at him by Markéloff, he recalled his last words: "Thou canst not whisper thyself out of the scrape!"—and here were those aged, dejected, murdered eyes!—And, as it is written in the Scriptures, "he wept bitterly,"—and wended his way to the oasis, to Fómushka and Fímushka and Snandúliya.

## XXXVI

When Marianna, on that same morning, came out of her room, she beheld Nezhdánoff, dressed and seated on the divan. With one hand he was supporting his head, the other lay helpless and motionless on his knees.—She went up to him.

"Good morning, Alexyéi. . . . Hast thou not undressed? hast thou slept? How pale thou art!"

His heavy eyelids slowly raised.

"I have not been undressed. I have not slept."

"Art thou ill? Or is this a trace from yesterday?"

Nezhdánoff shook his head.

"I have not slept since Solómin went into thy room."

"When?"

"Yesterday evening."

"Alexyéi, art thou jealous? Here's something new! And a pretty time thou hast chosen to be jealous! He did not remain with me more than a quarter of an hour. . . And we talked about his cousin, the priest,—and about how our marriage was to be managed."

"I know that he remained only a quarter of an hour:—I saw when he came out. And I am not

jealous, oh, no! But, nevertheless, I have not been able to get to sleep since."

"Why not?"

Nezhdánoff made no reply for a while.

"I have been thinking . . . thinking . . . thinking!"

"What about?"

"About thee . . . about him . . . and about myself."

"And at what conclusion hast thou arrived?"

"Shall I tell thee, Marianna?"

"Yes, tell me."

"I thought—that I was—in thy way . . and in his . . . and in my own."

"Mine? His? I imagine what thou intendest to say by that, although thou affirmest that thou art not jealous.—But how about thyself?"

"Marianna, there are two men in me—and one will give the other no peace. And so I think that it would be better if both of them were to cease to live."

"Come, stop that, Alexyéi, please.—What is the use of torturing thyself—and me? What we must do now is to consider what measures ought to be adopted. . . For they certainly will not leave us in peace."

Nezhdánoff took her hand affectionately.

"Sit down by my side, Marianna, and let us have a little chat, in a friendly way.—There is time enough for that.—Give me thy hand.—It

seems to me that it would not be a bad thing if we were to have an explanation,—although they say that all explanations, as a general thing, lead to still greater confusion. But thou art clever and good; thou wilt understand everything—and what I do not say in full, thou wilt fill out in thought. Sit down."

Nezhdánoff's voice was very tranquil—and a certain peculiar, friendly tenderness and entreaty shone in his eyes, which were intently fixed on Marianna.

She instantly and willingly seated herself beside him, and took his hand.

"Now, thanks, my dear one,—and listen. I shall not detain thee long. I have already prepared everything in my mind, during the night—all that I must say to thee. Now—listen.—Do not think that the occurrence of last evening disturbed me too much: I probably have been very ridiculous, and somewhat odious; but, of course, thou hast not thought anything evil or low about me . . . . thou knowest me.—I have said that that occurrence had not disturbed me; that is not true, that is nonsense . . . it did disturb me, but not because I was brought home drunk;—but because it definitively proved to me my bankruptcy! Not only in that I cannot drink as other Russian men drink—but altogether! altogether!—Marianna, I am bound to tell thee that I no longer believe in the cause which has

united us, by virtue of which we fled together from that house, and toward which—to speak the truth—I had already grown cold—when thy fire warmed and ignited me:—I do not believe in it! I do not believe in it!"

He placed his free hand on his eyes, and remained silent for a moment. . . . . Marianna, also, uttered not a word, and dropped her eyes. . . She was conscious that he was not telling her anything new.

"I used to think,"—went on Nezhdánoff, removing his hand from his eyes, no longer looking at Marianna,—"that I did believe in the cause—and merely doubted myself, my own strength, my skill; my abilities, I thought, were not proportionate to my convictions. . . But, obviously, it is not possible to separate these two things,—and why deceive myself? No—I do not believe *in the cause itself*.—And dost thou believe in it, Marianna?"

Marianna drew herself up, and raised her head.

"Yes, Alexyéi, I do believe in it. I believe in it with all the powers of my soul.—And I will consecrate my whole life to that cause! To my very last breath!"

Nezhdánoff turned toward her, and scrutinised her whole person with a touched and envious glance.

"Yes, exactly so; I expected that reply.—So now thou seest that we have nothing to do to-

gether: thou thyself, with one blow, hast cut asunder our bond."

Marianna said nothing.

"And there is Solómin,"—began Nezhdánoff again,—"although he does not believe either...."

"What?"

"No! He does not believe in it . . . and there is no need for him to do so: he is calmly advancing forward. A man who is walking along the road to the town does not ask himself: 'Does the town actually exist?' He walks on and on. That is the way it is with Solómin. And nothing more is necessary. But I . . . cannot go ahead; I will not go back; to remain in one spot is—loathsome. To whom can I propose that he shall be my companion? Thou knowest the proverb: 'One is aiming at one end, the other at another—and how can the matter work smoothly? And if one cannot endure it—what is the other to do?'"

"Alexyéi,"—said Marianna irresolutely,—"it seems to me that thou art exaggerating.—We love each other, do we not?"

Nezhdánoff heaved a deep sigh.

"Marianna . . . I bow down before thee . . . and thou hast pity on me,—and each of us is convinced of the other's honesty: that is the actual truth! But there is no love between us."

"But stay, Alexyéi; what art thou saying? Why, this very day, this very moment, they will

come in pursuit of us. . . . Surely we must go away together, and not part. . ."

"Yes; and go to Pope Zosíma, in order that he may marry us, in accordance with Solómin's suggestion. I know very well that in thine eyes this marriage is nothing more than a passport, a means of avoiding difficulties with the police . . . but, nevertheless, in a certain manner, it does impose obligations . . . to live together, side by side . . . or, if it does not *oblige,* at all events, it presupposes the desire to live together."

"What is the meaning of this, Alexyéi? Thou wilt remain here?"

"Yes!" came near bursting from Nezhdánoff's tongue; but he changed his mind, and said:

"N . . . n . . . No."

"In that case, thou wilt go off to some other place than the one whither I shall go?"

Nezhdánoff pressed her hand firmly, as it still lay in his hand.

"It would be a crime to leave thee without a protector, without a defender—and that I shall not do, bad as I may be. Thou shalt have a defender. . . Do not doubt that!"

Marianna bent toward Nezhdánoff,—and anxiously putting her face close to his, she tried to look into his eyes, into his soul—his very soul.

"What is the matter with thee, Alexyéi? What hast thou on thy heart? Tell me! . . . . Thou makest me uneasy. Thy words are so enig-

matic, so strange. . . . And thy face! I have never seen thee look like this!"

Nezhdánoff gently repulsed her, and gently kissed her hand. This time she did not resist—and did not laugh—but continued to gaze at him with anxiety and trepidation.

"Please do not worry. There is nothing strange about it.—My whole misfortune lies here. They say that the peasants thrashed Markéloff; he has had a taste of their fists, they have crushed in his ribs. . . . The peasants have not thrashed me, they have even drunk with me, drunk to my health . . . . but they have crushed in my soul worse than they have Markéloff's ribs. I was born out of joint. . . I have tried to straighten myself out, and have put myself more out of joint than before. Precisely that is what thou descriest on my face."

"Alexyéi," — said Marianna slowly: — "it would be a sin for thee not to be frank with me."

He clasped his hands tightly.

"Marianna, my whole being lies before thee, as in the palm of my hand; whatever I may do, I tell you beforehand: in reality, there is no cause, none whatever, for thee to feel surprised!"

Marianna was on the point of demanding an explanation of these words, but did not ask it, nevertheless . . and, moreover, at that moment, Solómin entered the room. His movements were more brisk and abrupt than usual. His eyes were

screwed up, his thick lips were closely compressed, his whole face seemed to have grown pointed, and to have assumed a cold, firm, and rather harsh expression.

"My friends,"—he began:—"I have come to tell you that you must make no delay. Make ready . . it is time for us to set out. You must be prepared an hour hence. You must go and get married. There is no news whatever from Pákhlin; his horses were first detained at Arzhánoe, and then sent back. . . . He remained there. Probably he has been carried off to the town. He will not turn informer, of course, but, God knows, he will blab, in all probability. And they might find out through the horses. My cousin is forewarned. Pável will go with you. He will also act as your witness."

"And you . . . and thou?"—asked Nezhdánoff.—"Art not thou going also? I see that thou art dressed for a journey,"—he added, indicating, with a glance, the tall wading-boots in which Solómin had entered.

"Oh, I . . . just happened . . so . . it is muddy in the yard."

"But thou wilt not be held responsible for us?"

"I think not . . . in any case—that is my business. And so, an hour hence.—Marianna, Tatyána wishes to see you. She has made some preparations there."

"Ah! Yes! I had been meaning to go to her. . ."

Marianna went toward the door. . . .

A strange expression, something in the nature of terror, of pain, was depicted on Nezhdánoff's countenance. . .

"Marianna, art thou going away?"—he suddenly said, in a feeling voice. She stopped.

"I will return in half an hour. It will not take me long to pack."

"Yes; but come to me. . . ."

"Certainly;—why?"

"I want to take one more look at thee."—He looked at her with a long gaze.

"Farewell, farewell, Marianna!"—She was astonished.—"What the deuce . . . what am I saying? That was only . . . a slip of the tongue. —Thou wilt return in half an hour, wilt thou not? Yes?"

"Of course. . ."

"Well, yes . . . yes. . . . Pardon me. My head is all in a snarl, with lack of sleep.—I will pack also . . . immediately."

Marianna left the room. Solómin was about to follow her.

Nezhdánoff stopped him.

"Solómin!"

"What is it?"

"Give me thy hand. I must thank thee for thy hospitality."

Solómin laughed.

"What an idea!"—Nevertheless, he gave him his hand.

"And here is one thing more,"—pursued Nezhdánoff:—"if anything should happen to me, may I depend upon thee that thou wilt not abandon Marianna?"

"Thy future wife?"

"Well, yes—Marianna!"

"In the first place, I am convinced that nothing will happen to thee: and in the second place, thou mayest rest easy:—Marianna is as precious to me as she is to thee."

"Oh! I know that . . . . I know it . . . . I know it! Well, very good indeed. And thanks. —So, in an hour."

"In an hour."

"I shall be ready. Good-bye."

Solómin left the room, and overtook Marianna on the staircase. He had intended to say something to her about Nezhdánoff—but held his peace. And Marianna, on her side, understood that Solómin had intended to say something to her—and precisely about Nezhdánoff—and that he had refrained.—And she, also, held her peace.

## XXXVII

THE very moment Solómin was gone, Nezhdánoff sprang from the divan, strode from one corner of the room to the other a couple of times, then stood still for a moment, in a sort of stony meditation, in the middle of the room; then he gave a sudden start, flung off his "masquerade" costume, kicked it into a corner, got out, and donned his former clothing.—Then he went to the three-legged table, took from the drawer two sealed documents and some other small object, thrust it into his pocket, and left the papers on the table. Then he squatted down on his heels in front of the stove, opened the fire-door. . . . There was a whole heap of ashes in the stove. This was all that remained of Nezhdánoff's papers, of the private note-book. . . . He had burned them all in the course of the night. But there, also, in the stove, on one side, leaning against one of the walls, was Marianna's portrait, which Markéloff had given him. Evidently, he had lacked the courage to burn that portrait! Nezhdánoff carefully took it out and placed it beside the sealed papers.

Then, with a decided movement of the hand,

he seized his cap, and was on the point of going to the door . . . but paused, turned back, and entered Marianna's room. There he stood for a moment, glanced around him, and approaching her narrow bed, he bent down—and with one dumb sob, he pressed his lips to the pillow, and to the foot of the bed. . . . Then he suddenly straightened himself up and, pulling his cap down on his forehead, he rushed out.

Nezhdánoff slipped out into the flower-garden, having met no one, either in the corridor, or on the stairs, or below. It was a grey day, the sky hung low, a damp wind was moving the tips of the grass and rocking the leaves on the trees; the factory was banging and clanking less than usual at the same hour on other days; from its yard there was wafted an odour of coal, tar, grease.—Nezhdánoff cast a keen and suspicious glance around him, and walked straight to that aged apple-tree which had attracted his attention, on the very day of his arrival, when he had looked, for the first time, out of the windows of his tiny quarters. The trunk of the apple-tree was overgrown with dry moss; roughish, bare shoots, with reddish-green leaves dangling here and there, rose crookedly upward, like aged, beseeching arms, bent at the elbows. Nezhdánoff took up a firm stand on the dark earth which surrounded the root of the apple-tree, and drew from his pocket that small object which had been in the table-

drawer.—Then he cast an attentive glance at the windows of the wing. . . . . "If any one were looking at me, at this moment," he thought, "then, perhaps, I would defer. . ." But not a single human face showed itself anywhere . . . as though everything were dead, as though everything had turned away from him, had withdrawn far away forever, had left him to the arbitrary will of Fate.—Only the factory went on humming and stinking, and overhead, fine, needle-like drops of cold rain began to fall.

Then Nezhdánoff, casting a glance athwart the crooked branches of the tree, beneath which he was standing, at the low-hanging, grey, unsympathetically-blind and wet sky, yawned, stretched, thought: "There is nothing else left for me to do; I will not go back to Petersburg, to prison," flung his cap far from him, and with a preliminary sensation all over his body of a rather sweet, strong, languid effort, he placed the revolver against his breast, and pulled the trigger. . . .

Something immediately struck him, and not very violently, either; . . . but he was already lying on his back, and trying to understand what had happened to him, and how it had come about that he had just seen Tatyána. . . . He even made an effort to call her, to say: "Akh! it is unnecessary!"—but he had already grown quite numb, and a turbid-grey whirlwind was circling

before his face, in his eyes, over his brow, in his brain—and something dreadfully heavy and flat was pressing him forever to the ground.

It was not without cause that Nezhdánoff fancied he saw Tatyána: at the very moment when he pressed the trigger of the revolver she had stepped to one of the windows of the wing, and had caught sight of him standing under the apple-tree. Before she had had time to think, "What is he standing there for, under the apple-tree, bareheaded, in this sort of weather?"—he fell headlong to the ground, like a sheaf of wheat. She did not hear the shot,—the sound of it was very faint,—but she instantly scented something bad, and rushed headlong down-stairs and into the garden. . . . She ran up to Nezhdánoff. . . . . "Alexyéi Dmítritch, what is the matter with you?" But darkness already had seized him in its grasp. Tatyána bent over him, and saw the blood. . .

"Pável!"—she shrieked, in an altered voice. —"Pável!"

A few moments later, Marianna, Solómin, Pável, and a couple of the factory-hands were in the garden. They immediately raised Nezhdánoff and carried him into the wing, and laid him on that same divan on which he had passed his last night.

He lay on his back, with half-open, motionless eyes, with a purpling face, and a dull, prolonged

rattle in his throat, catching his breath from time to time, and apparently choking. Life had not yet left him.—Marianna and Solómin stood, one on each side of the divan, both almost as pale as Nezhdánoff himself. Both were shocked, shaken, annihilated—especially Marianna—but not surprised. "How was it that we did not foresee this?" flashed through their minds; and, at the same time, it seemed to them that they . . . yes, they had foreseen it.—When he had said to Marianna: "Whatever I may do, I tell thee in advance: thou must not be surprised at anything"—and again, when he had spoken of the two men who could not get on together within him—had not something in the nature of a dim foreboding stirred in her?—Then why had not she paused at once and reflected upon those words and that foreboding?—Why was it that now she did not dare to glance at Solómin, as though he were her accomplice . . as though he, also, felt the gnawings of conscience? Why was she so illimitably, so desperately sorry for Nezhdánoff, but also so terrified, so pained—and conscience-stricken? Perhaps it had depended upon her to save him? Why was it that neither of them dared utter a word? They hardly dared breathe—and were waiting for . . . what? Oh, my God!

Solómin sent for a doctor, although, of course, there was not the slightest hope. Tatyána laid

a large sponge, soaked in cold water, on Nezhdánoff's small, already blackening and bloodless wound, and also dampened his hair with water and vinegar. All at once, Nezhdánoff ceased to rattle in the throat, and began to stir.

"He is regaining consciousness,"—whispered Solómin.

Marianna knelt down by the divan. . . . Nezhdánoff looked at her . . . . up to that time his eyes had been fixed like those of all dying persons.

"I am still . . . alive"—he said, almost inaudibly.—"I have failed even in this, too. . . . I am detaining you."

"Alyósha,"—moaned Marianna.

"Well . . . it will soon be over. . . Dost thou remember, Marianna . . . . my poem . . . 'Surround me with flowers'? . . . . Where are the flowers? . . . . But why art thou there? . . . . Yonder, in my letter . . . ."

He suddenly began to tremble all over.

"Okh, here she is. . . Give your . . . hands to . . . each other—in my presence. . . . . Be quick . . . give them. . . ."

Solómin grasped Marianna's hand. Her head lay upon the divan, face downward, close to the wound.

Solómin himself stood straight and stern, as lowering as night.

"So . . . it is well . . . so. . . ."

Again Nezhdánoff began to gasp for breath, but in an unusual way now. . . . His chest was inflated, his sides were contracted. . . .

He was evidently trying to lay his hand on their clasped hands, but his hands were already dead.

"He is passing away,"—whispered Tatyána, as she stood by the door, and she began to cross herself.

The panting breaths became rarer, briefer. . . . His gaze still sought Marianna . . . but a sort of dreadful pallor was already veiling his eyes from within. . . .

"It is well"—were his last words.

He was dead . . . . but the clasped hands of Solómin and Marianna still rested on his breast.

The following is what he had written in the two brief notes. One was addressed to Sílin, and consisted of a few lines only:

"Farewell, brother, friend, farewell! When thou receivest this scrap of paper,—I shall be no more. Ask not how, why,—and do not grieve; know that I am better off now. Take our immortal Púshkin, and read in 'Evgény Onyégin' the description of Lénsky's death. Remember: 'The windows are whitened with chalk; the master is no more' . . . and so forth. That is all. I have nothing to say to thee—because I should have to say too much, and there is no time. But I did not want to go away without informing thee; for then thou

wouldst have thought of me as living, and I should have sinned against our friendship. Farewell; live on.

"Thy friend, A. N."

The second letter was somewhat longer. It was addressed to Solómin and Marianna.—The contents were as follows:

"My children!"

(Immediately after these words there was a break: something had been erased, or, rather, blotted out, as though tears had splashed there.)

"It may seem strange to you that I call you thus, being almost a child myself,—and thou, Solómin, art older than I, of course. But I am dying—and, as I stand at the end of life, I look upon myself as an old man. I am greatly to blame toward both of you, especially toward thee, Marianna—in that I have caused you so much sorrow—(I know, Marianna, that thou wilt grieve)—and have given you so much trouble. But what was to be done? I could find no other issue. I did not know how to *simplify myself;* the only thing that was left was to erase myself altogether.—Marianna, I should have been a burden, both to myself and to thee. Thou art magnanimous—thou wouldst have rejoiced in that burden, as in a fresh sacrifice; . . . . but I had no right to impose that sacrifice upon thee; thou hast a better and a greater business.—My children, permit me to unite you, as by a hand from beyond the grave.—You will be happy together. Marianna, thou wilt finally

fall in love with Solómin—and he . . . he fell in love with thee the moment he saw thee at the Sipyágins. That was no secret for me, although thou and I eloped together a few days later.—Akh, that morning! How magnificent, fresh, young it was! It seems to me now like a token, like a symbol of your double life,—his and thine;—and I merely happened to be there accidentally, in his stead. . But it is time to end; I have no desire to move you to pity. . . . I desire only to justify myself.—To-morrow will bring several painful moments. . . . . But what is to be done? There is no other issue, is there?—Farewell, Marianna, my fine, honest girl!—Farewell, Solómin!—I entrust her to thee.—Live happily—live with benefit to others; and do thou, Marianna, remember me only when thou art happy.—Think of me as of a man who also was good and honest, but for whom it was more decorous to die than to live.—Whether I have loved thee with love I do not know, dear friend, but I do not know that I have never experienced a stronger feeling, and that I should find it still more terrible to die if I did not bear that feeling with me to the grave.

"Marianna! If ever thou shalt meet a young girl, Mashúrin by name,—but—but Solómin knows her, and thou hast seen her, I think—tell her that I thought of her with gratitude not long before my end. . . She will understand.

"But I must tear myself away.—I have just looked out of the window:—one beautiful star was hanging amid the scurrying storm-clouds.—No matter how swiftly they swept past, they could not conceal it. That star reminded me of thee, Marianna.—At this moment

thou art sleeping in the adjoining room—and suspectest nothing. . . . I have been to thy door, and laid my ear against it, and it seemed to me that I detected thy pure, calm breathing. Farewell! farewell! Farewell, my children, my friends!

"Your A.

"Ba, ba, ba! How is it that in my *dying* letter I have said nothing about our great cause?—Evidently, because, in the face of death, it is no longer necessary to lie. . . . Marianna, forgive me for this postscript. . . The lie was in me . . . and not in that in which thou believest!

"Yes! one thing more: perhaps thou art thinking, Marianna: 'He was afraid of the prison, where they would infallibly have placed him—and has found *this* means of escaping it'?—No; the prison is of no importance; but to be incarcerated in prison on account of a cause in which one does not believe is—entirely unfitting. And I am making an end of myself—not out of fear of prison.

"Farewell, Marianna! Farewell, my pure, untouched one!"

Marianna and Solómin read this letter in turn.—Then she placed her portrait and both the documents in her pocket,—and remained motionless.

Then Solómin said to her:

"All is ready, Marianna; let us go. We must fulfil his will."

Marianna went up to Nezhdánoff, touched her lips to his brow, which was already growing cold,

and, turning to Solómin, she said:—"Let us go."

He took her by the hand and they both left the room.

When, a few hours later, the police made a descent upon the factory, they found Nezhdánoff, of course—but a corpse.—Tatyána had laid him out neatly, had put a white pillow under his head, had crossed his hands, had even placed a bouquet of flowers on a table by his side.—Pável, having received all requisite instructions, received the police officials with the utmost obsequiousness, and with equal derision,—so that they did not know whether to thank him or to arrest him. He narrated to them, in detail, how the suicide had taken place; he fed them with Swiss cheese, he gave them Madeira to drink;—but with regard to the present whereabouts of Vasíly Feodótitch and the strange young lady, he asserted his utter ignorance, and merely confined himself to the statement that Vasíly Feodótitch never absented himself for long together—because of business;—that he would be back on the morrow, if not that same day, and then, without losing a minute, would report himself in town.—He was a punctilious man about that sort of thing!

So the officials went off as wise as they came, after placing a guard over the body, and having promised to send the coroner.

## XXXVIII

A COUPLE of days after these events there drove into the yard of the "obliging" Father Zosíma a peasant-cart, in which sat two men and a woman, with whom we are already acquainted—and, on the day following their arrival, they were joined in matrimony. Soon after that, they disappeared, and good Zosíma did not grieve in the least over what he had done. At the factory, which Solómin had abandoned, a letter was found which was addressed to the proprietor, and was handed to him by Pável; it contained a full and detailed account of the state of the business—it was brilliant,—and requested a three months' leave of absence. This letter had been written two days before the death of Nezhdánoff, from which the conclusion might have been drawn that Solómiń even then had considered it necessary to go away with him and Marianna, and to hide for a season. The inquest, which took place in consequence of the suicide, revealed nothing.—They buried the body; Sipyágin ceased all further search for his niece.

And nine months later Markéloff was tried, and at the trial he bore himself exactly as he had

done toward the Governor: calmly, not without dignity, and in rather a depressed manner.—His customary abruptness had softened down—but not through pusillanimity: a different, a more noble sentiment had a share in this.—He did not defend himself in any particular, he repented of nothing, he accused no one, and mentioned no names; his haggard face, with its dimmed eyes, maintained one expression: of submission to Fate, and of firmness; and his brief, but straightforward and truthful answers aroused in his very judges a feeling that was akin to compassion. Even the peasants, who had captured him and who testified against him,—even they shared that sentiment,—and spoke of him as a "simple" and good gentleman. But his offence was too flagrant; he could not escape punishment; and apparently, he himself accepted that punishment as his due.—Out of the remaining participants in the cause—who were not numerous, however,—Miss Mashúrin went into hiding; Ostrodúmoff was murdered by a petty burgher whom he was inciting to rebellion, and who hit him "awkwardly"; Golúshkin, in virtue of his "sincere repentance"—(he nearly went out of his mind with terror and grief)—was subjected to a light punishment; Kislyakóff was held for a month under arrest, and then he was released, and was not even prevented from again "galloping" over the governments; death had set Nezhdánoff

free; Solómin, in default of proofs, was left under some suspicion,—and in peace. (However, he had not avoided trial, but had presented himself at the proper time.) There was not even any question as to Marianna. . . . Pákhlin finally managed to wriggle out of the scrape; and no special attention was paid to him, anyway.

A year and a half elapsed; the winter of 1870 came. In Petersburg, in that very Petersburg where Privy Councillor and Court Chamberlain Sipyágin was preparing to play a prominent part, where his wife was the patroness of all the arts, gave musical evenings, and established cheap kitchens—and Mr. Kallomyeítzeff was regarded as one of the most trustworthy officials in his department,—along one of the lines on Vasíly Island,[1] a small man, in a modest coat with a catskin collar, was walking, limping and swaying slightly from side to side as he went. It was Pákhlin. He had changed considerably of late; silver threads were visible in the locks of hair on his temples, which peeped out from beneath the rim of his fur cap.—Along the sidewalk there advanced toward him a rather plump lady, tall of stature, who was carefully wrapped up in a cloak of dark cloth.—Pákhlin cast a preoccu-

[1] A ward of the city, directly across the Nevá from the main part. Peter the Great originally intended to make it the centre of the town, and began to construct canals that it might resemble a Dutch town. The cross-streets are called "lines" and numbered.—TRANSLATOR.

pied glance at her, passed by . . . then suddenly halted, reflected, threw his hands apart—and wheeling about with animation, and overtaking her, he peered up under her bonnet into her face.

"Miss Mashúrin?"—he said in a low tone.

The lady majestically measured him with a stare, and, without uttering a word, went her way.

"My dear Miss Mashúrin, I have recognised you,"—pursued Pákhlin, limping along by her side,—"only, you need have no apprehensions. I shall not betray you, you know—I am *too* delighted to meet you!—I am Pákhlin, Síla Pákhlin, you know, the friend of Nezhdánoff. . . . Drop in at my house:—I live two steps from here. . . . Pray do!"

"*Io sono Contessa Rocca di Santo-Fiume!*"—replied the lady, in a low tone, but with a wonderfully pure Russian accent.

"Well, if you 're a contessa . . . . let 's call it contessa. . . . Come in, let 's have a chat. . . ."

"But where do you live?"—asked the Italian countess suddenly, in Russian.—"I am pressed for time."

"I live here, in this line; there is my house yonder, that grey, three-story house.—How good you are not to try to be mysterious with me! Give me your arm; come on.—Have you been here long? And why are you a countess? Have you married some Italian count?"

Miss Mashúrin had not married any count whatever: she had been furnished with a passport, issued in the name of a certain Countess Rocca di Santo-Fiume, who had died not long before; and, armed with this, she had coolly betaken herself to Russia, although she understood not a single word of Italian and had the most Russian face possible.

Pákhlin conducted her to his modest quarters. His hunchbacked sister, with whom he lived, came out from behind the partition which separated the tiny kitchen from the equally tiny anteroom, to welcome the visitor.

"Here, Snápotchka,"—said he,—"let me introduce my greatest friend; give us tea as quickly as possible."

Miss Mashúrin, who would not have gone to Pákhlin's had he not mentioned Nezhdánoff's name, removed her hat, and, smoothing with her masculine hand her hair, which was clipped close, as in former days, bowed and seated herself in silence. She had not changed in the least; her very gown was the same that she had worn two years previously; but a certain impassive grief had settled down in her eyes, which imparted a somewhat touching character to the habitually grim expression of her face.

Snandúlya ran to prepare the samovár, and Pákhlin placed himself by the side of Miss Mashúrin, tapped her lightly on the knee, and hung

his head; and when he tried to speak, was forced first to clear his throat; his voice broke, and small tear-drops glistened in his eyes.—Miss Mashúrin sat motionless and stiff, and did not lean against the back of her chair, and stared gloomily aside.

"Yes, yes,"—began Pákhlin,—"those were affairs! When I look at you I recall . . . many things, and many people.—Dead and living.—My love-birds are dead . . . but you did not know them, I think;—and both, as I predicted, died on the same day.—Nezhdánoff . . . . poor Nezhdánoff! . . . . Probably you know. . . ."

"Yes, I know,"—said Miss Mashúrin, still with averted gaze.

"And do you know about Ostrodúmoff, also?"

Miss Mashúrin merely nodded her head. She wanted him to go on talking about Nezhdánoff—but she could not bring herself to ask him to do so.—But he understood her, nevertheless.

"I heard that he mentioned you in his dying letter.—Is that true?"

Miss Mashúrin did not immediately reply.

"Yes,"—she said at last.

"He was a splendid man. Only, he got out of his proper sphere!—he was no more of a revolutionist than I am! Do you know what he really was?—A romanticist of realism! Do you understand me?"

Miss Mashúrin darted a swift glance at Pá-

khlin. She did not understand him, and she would not take the trouble to understand him.—It struck her as improper and strange that he should dare to compare himself to Nezhdánoff; but she thought: "Let him brag now." (Although he was not bragging in the least, but rather, according to his own notion, was humbling himself.)

"A certain Sílin hunted me up,"—went on Pákhlin;—"Nezhdánoff had written to him, also, before he died. And this is what he, that Sílin, asked: 'Was it not possible to find any papers of the deceased?'—But Alyósha's effects were sealed up . . . . and there were no papers; he had burned everything—he had burned even his verses.—Perhaps you were not aware that he wrote verses? I am sorry about them; I am convinced that some of them must have been far from bad.—All that vanished with him—everything fell into the general whirlpool—and sank forever! The only thing that is left is his memory in the hearts of his friends,—until they, also, shall vanish in their turn!"

Pákhlin relapsed into silence.

"The Sipyágins, on the other hand,"—he began again,—"you remember those patronising, pompous, repulsive big-wigs—are now at the summit of power and glory!"—Miss Mashúrin did not "remember" the Sipyágins at all; but Pákhlin hated both of them to such a degree—

especially him—that he could not deny himself the satisfaction of "giving them a tongue-lashing."—"People say they have such a lofty tone in their house!—They talk of nothing but virtue!! Only, I have noticed if virtue is talked of too much anywhere,—it 's all the same as though too much perfume is burned in the room of a sick person; some secret filthiness has certainly previously been perpetrated there.—It 's suspicious!—*They* ruined poor Alexyéi, those Sipyágins."

"How about Solómin?"—inquired Miss Mashúrin.—She had suddenly ceased to wish to hear any more about *him* from *that* man.

"Solómin!"—exclaimed Pákhlin.—"He 's a gallant fellow. He extricated himself splendidly. He has quitted his former factory, and taken the best men away with him.—There was one there . . . a dangerous fellow, they say! His name was Pável . . . and he took him away. Now, they say, he has his own factory—a small one—somewhere away off, in Perm, on some sort of a co-operative basis. That man won't dessert his business! He 'll cut his way through!—He has a sharp bill—and a strong one, to boot. He 's a fine, gallant fellow! And the chief point is: he 's no sudden healer of universal wounds.—For, what sort of a race are we Russians, anyway? We are always waiting: something or somebody is coming soon, we say, to heal us instan-

taneously, to cicatrise our wounds, to pull out all our maladies, like an aching tooth. Who will that magician be?—Darwinism? The rural districts? Arkhíp Perepéntieff? A foreign war? —whatever you please! Only, good sir, pull the tooth! !—All that is laziness, languor, lack of comprehension!—But Solómin is not of that sort; no,—he does n't pull teeth,—he 's a gallant fellow!"

Miss Mashúrin made a gesture with her hand, as much as to say: "Therefore, he should be wiped out."

"Well, and that young girl,"—she asked,— "I have forgotten her name—who was with him then—with Nezhdánoff—did she go away?"

"Marianna? Yes, she is now the wife of that same Solómin. She has been married to him for more than a year. At first, she merely accounted herself as such—but now, they say, she has become his real wife. Ye-es."

Again Miss Mashúrin made that gesture.

In times past she had been jealous of Marianna with Nezhdánoff; but now she was enraged with her—for how could she betray his memory? ! . . . "I suppose there is a child already?"—she added, with scorn.

"Perhaps. I do not know.—But where are you going, where?"—added Pákhlin, perceiving that she was taking her hat.—"Wait: Snápotchka will give us tea directly." He was not

so anxious to detain Miss Mashúrin, in particular, as he was not to let slip the opportunity for putting into words all that had been accumulating and seething in his soul.—Since Pákhlin's return to Petersburg he had seen very few people, especially young people.—The affair with Nezhdánoff had frightened him, he had become very cautious, and shunned society,—and young men, on their side, regarded him with suspicion. One had even cursed him to his face for an informer. He was not fond of intimacy with older people; hence it came to pass that he was sometimes forced to hold his tongue for weeks at a time. He did not utter his thoughts to his sister:—not because he considered her incapable of understanding them—oh, no! He had a high opinion of her mind. . . . But with her it was necessary to speak seriously, and with entire truthfulness; and just as soon as he began to "exaggerate," or "set off fireworks," she began to contemplate him with a peculiar, intent, and compassionate look;—and he felt ashamed of himself. But say, is it possible to get along without a little "exaggeration"? If you only have a deuce —why, trump with it! Hence Pákhlin had begun to find life in Petersburg repulsive, and he was already meditating a removal to Moscow, possibly.—Divers combinations, reflections, inventions, amusing or malicious remarks had accumulated within him, like water in a locked mill.

. . . The sluice-gate could not be raised; the water was becoming stagnant and slimy.—Miss Mashúrin turned up. . . And so he hoisted the sluice-gate and talked and talked.

Did Petersburg catch it, and Petersburg life, and all Russia?—Nobody and nothing received the slightest quarter!—All this possessed but mediocre interest for Miss Mashúrin; but she did not retort or interrupt him . . . and he demanded no more.

"Yes, ma'am," he said; "a merry little time has come, I can tell you! In society, perfect stagnation; everybody is hellishly bored! In literature, emptiness—you could roll a ball over the field! In criticism . . . if a leading young critic has to say that 'it is the property of a hen to lay eggs,' you must give him full twenty pages, to set forth this great truth—and even then he will hardly compass it! These gentlemen are as puffed up, I tell you, as feather-beds, as tiresomely prolix as a dish of bread steeped in kvas, —and, foaming at the mouth, they utter . . . commonplaces! In science . . . ha-ha-ha! *the learned Kant* is with us also; only, in the collars of the engineers! In art it is the same! Would n't you like to go to a concert to-day? You will hear the national singer Agremántsky. . . He enjoys great success. . . But if a bream with buckwheat groats—*a bream with buckwheat groats,* I tell you, were endowed with a voice, he would sing precisely as that gentleman does!—And that

same Skoropíkhin,—you know, our Aristarchus since time immemorial—praises him! 'That 's none of your Western art,' says he! And he praises our abominable painters also!—'I,' says he, 'was the first to go into raptures over Europe, over the Italians;—and I have heard Rossini, and I said to myself!—"Eh! eh!—I have seen Raphael. . Eh! eh! . . ." And that 'eh! eh!' is entirely sufficient for your young generation; and they repeat after Skoropíkhin: 'Eh! eh!'—and are content, just think of it! And at the same time the masses are frightfully wretched, the taxes have effected their definitive ruin; and the only thing which the reform has accomplished is that all the peasant men have donned the Russian cap, and the peasant women have abandoned their head-dresses. . . . And famine! and drunkenness! and the usurers!"

But at this point Miss Mashúrin yawned—and Pákhlin comprehended that he must change the conversation.

"You have not yet told me,"—he said to her,—"where you have been these two years, and whether you have been back here long—and what you have done—and how you have been converted into an Italian, and why? . . . ."

"There is no occasion for you to know all that,"—interrupted Miss Mashúrin:—"what 's the use? That is no longer in your line, you know."

Pákhlin seemed to have been stung by some-

thing,—and with the object of hiding his discomfiture, he laughed a short, constrained laugh.

"Well, as you like,"—he said;—"I know that in the eyes of the present generation I am a man who is not up to date; and, in fact, I cannot count myself . . . . in those ranks . . . ." He did not finish his phrase.—"Here is Snandúliya bringing us our tea. Drink a cup, and listen to me. . . Perhaps you will find something in my words which may prove of interest to you."

Miss Mashúrin took a cup and a piece of sugar, and began to drink, nibbling at the sugar.

Pákhlin laughed outright.

"It is a good thing that the police are not here, or the Italian countess . . . what the deuce is the name?"

"Rocca di Santo-Fiume,"—said Miss Mashúrin, with imperturbable dignity, as she sucked in a boiling stream of tea.

"Rocca di Santo-Fiume!"—repeated Pákhlin,—"and she drinks tea in Russian peasant fashion! Really, that is downright incredible! The police would suspect something at once."

"Some fellow or other,"—remarked Miss Mashúrin, "in uniform, bothered me at the frontier; he kept questioning me. When I could not endure it any longer, I said to him: 'Do let me alone, for God's sake!'"

"Did you say that to him in Italian?"

"No, in Russian."

"And what did he do?"

"What did he do? He went away, of course."

"Bravo!"—cried Pákhlin.—"Hey, there, contessa! Have another cup! Well, see here, this is what I wanted to say to you: you expressed yourself rather curtly about Solómin just now.—But do you know what I must inform you? Such as he are the real thing. You can't understand them at once, but they are the genuine article, believe me; and the future belongs to them. They are not heroes; they are not even those 'heroes of labour' about whom some eccentric man—an American or an Englishman—once wrote a book, for the edification of us miserable wretches; they are strong, grey, monotoned people of the masses. That 's the only kind that is needed now! Just look at Solómin: he is as clever as the day,—and healthy as a fish. . . . In what respect is n't he splendid! For, you see, with us in Russia, up to the present day, this has been the state of things: if you were a live man, with feeling, with knowledge—then, infallibly, you were a sick man! But Solómin's heart, I think, aches with the same pain as ours, and he hates the same things we hate,—but his nerves hold their peace—and his whole body obeys him, as it should, . . . . which signifies that he is a fine fellow! Upon my word: he 's a man with an ideal—and without phrases; he 's cultured—and from the common people; he 's

simple—and knows his own mind. . . . What more would you have? . . .

"And pay no heed to the fact,"—went on Pákhlin, waxing more and more fervent, and oblivious of the circumstances that Miss Mashúrin had not been listening to him for a long while past, and was again staring off somewhere in the distance,—"and pay no heed to the fact that, with us in Russia nowadays, all sorts of folks thrive: Slavyánophils, and officials, and simple men, and double-flowered generals, and epicureans, and imitators, and eccentric persons—(I used to know one lady, Khavrónya Pryshtchóff by name, who suddenly, without rhyme or reason, turned legitimist, and assured everybody that when she died all they would have to do would be to open her body, and on her heart they would find inscribed the name of Henry V. . And that in a Khavrónya Pryshtchóff, forsooth!)—Pay no heed to all this, my most respected madam, but understand that our true, our royal road lies there, where there are Solómins, grey, simple, crafty Solómins! Remember *when* I told you this—in the winter of 1870, when Germany is preparing to annihilate France—when . . . ."

"Sflushka,"—Snandúliya's gentle voice made itself heard behind Pákhlin's back,—"it seems to me that, in thy judgments as to the future, thou art forgetting our religion, and its influence. . .

It would be better if thou wouldst offer her another cup of tea."

Pákhlin corrected himself.

"Akh, yes, my most respected madam,—will you not, in fact? . . ."

But Miss Mashúrin slowly turned her dark eyes upon him, and said thoughtfully:

"I wanted to ask you, Pákhlin, have you not some note of Nezhdánoff's—or his photograph?"

"I have his photograph;—and a pretty good one, I think.—It is in the table.—I will hunt it up for you immediately."

He began to rummage in his drawer; and Snandúliya stepped up to Miss Mashúrin, and, after gazing long and intently at her, she pressed her hand, as that of a comrade.

"Here it is! I 've found it!"—exclaimed Pákhlin, and handed over the photograph. Miss Mashúrin hastily thrust it into her pocket,—after hardly a glance at it, and without saying, "Thank you,"—put on her hat, and walked toward the door.

"You are going?"—said Pákhlin.—"Where are you living, at least?"

"Wherever it happens."

"I understand you do not wish to have me know that. Well, please to tell me one thing, at least: are you still acting by the orders of Vasíly Nikoláevitch?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"Or, perhaps, of some one else.—Of Sídor Sídoritch?"

Miss Mashúrin made no answer.

"Or does some anonymous individual give you your orders?"

Miss Mashúrin had already crossed the threshold.

"Well, perhaps it is some anonymous individual."

She slammed the door.

Pákhlin stood for a long time motionless in front of that closed door.

"Anonymous Russia!"—he said at last.

# A RECKLESS CHARACTER

(1881)

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# A RECKLESS CHARACTER[1]

## I

THERE were eight of us in the room, and we were discussing contemporary matters and persons.

"I do not understand these gentlemen!" remarked A.—"They are fellows of a reckless sort. . . . Really, desperate. . . . There has never been anything of the kind before."

"Yes, there has," put in P., a grey-haired old man, who had been born about the twenties of the present century;—"there were reckless men in days gone by also. Some one said of the poet Yázykoff, that he had enthusiasm which was not directed to anything, an objectless enthusiasm; and it was much the same with those people—their recklessness was without an object. But see here, if you will permit me, I will narrate to you the story of my grandnephew, Mísha Pólteff. It may serve as a sample of the recklessness of those days."

[1] See foot-note to "Old Portraits," in this volume.—TRANSLATOR.

# A RECKLESS CHARACTER

He made his appearance in God's daylight in the year 1828, I remember, on his father's ancestral estate, in one of the most remote nooks of a remote government of the steppes. I still preserve a distinct recollection of Mísha's father, Andréi Nikoláevitch Pólteff. He was a genuine, old-fashioned landed proprietor, a pious inhabitant of the steppes, sufficiently well educated,—according to the standards of that epoch,—rather crack-brained, if the truth must be told, and subject, in addition, to epileptic fits. . . . That also is an old-fashioned malady. . . . However, Andréi Nikoláevitch's attacks were quiet, and they generally terminated in a sleep and in a fit of melancholy.—He was kind of heart, courteous in manner, not devoid of some pomposity: I have always pictured to myself the Tzar Mikhaíl Feódorovitch as just that sort of a man.

Andréi Nikoláevitch's whole life flowed past in the punctual discharge of all the rites established since time immemorial, in strict conformity with all the customs of ancient-orthodox, Holy-Russian life. He rose and went to bed, he ate and went to the bath, he waxed merry or wrathful (he did both the one and the other rarely, it is true), he even smoked his pipe, he even played cards (two great innovations!), not as suited his fancy, not after his own fashion, but in accordance with the rule and tradition handed down from his ancestors, in proper and dignified style.

He himself was tall of stature, of noble mien and brawny; he had a quiet and rather hoarse voice, as is frequently the case with virtuous Russians; he was neat about his linen and his clothing, wore white neckerchiefs and long-skirted coats of snuff-brown hue, but his noble blood made itself manifest notwithstanding; no one would have taken him for a priest's son or a merchant! Andréi Nikoláevitch always knew, in all possible circumstances and encounters, precisely how he ought to act and exactly what expressions he must employ; he knew when he ought to take medicine, and what medicine to take, which symptoms he should heed and which might be disregarded .... in a word, he knew everything that it was proper to do.... It was as though he said: "Everything has been foreseen and decreed by the old men—the only thing is not to devise anything of your own.... And the chief thing of all is, don't go even as far as the threshold without God's blessing!"—I am bound to admit that deadly tedium reigned in his house, in those low-ceiled, warm, dark rooms which so often resounded from the chanting of vigils and prayer-services,[1] with an odour of incense and fasting-viands,[2] which almost never left them!

[1] The Vigil-service (consisting of Vespers and Matins, or Compline and Matins) may be celebrated in unconsecrated buildings, and the devout not infrequently have it, as well as prayer-services, at home.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Meaning the odour of the oil which must be used in preparing food, instead of butter, during the numerous fasts.—TRANSLATOR.

Andréi Nikoláevitch had married, when he was no longer in his first youth, a poor young noblewoman of the neighbourhood, a very nervous and sickly person, who had been reared in one of the government institutes for gentlewomen. She played far from badly on the piano; she spoke French in boarding-school fashion; she was given to enthusiasm, and still more addicted to melancholy, and even to tears. . . . In a word, she was of an uneasy character. As she considered that her life had been ruined, she could not love her husband, who, "as a matter of course," did not understand her; but she respected, she tolerated him; and as she was a thoroughly honest and perfectly cold being, she never once so much as thought of any other "object." Moreover, she was constantly engrossed by anxieties: in the first place, over her really feeble health; in the second place, over the health of her husband, whose fits always inspired her with something akin to superstitious terror; and, in conclusion, over her only son, Mísha, whom she reared herself with great zeal. Andréi Nikoláevitch did not prevent his wife's busying herself with Mísha—but on one condition: she was never, under any circumstances, to depart from the limits, which had been defined once for all, wherein everything in his house must revolve! Thus, for example: during the Christmas holidays and Vasíly's evening

preceding the New Year, Mísha was not only permitted to dress up in costume along with the other "lads,"—doing so was even imposed upon him as an obligation.[1] . . . On the other hand, God forbid that he should do it at any other time! And so forth, and so forth.

## II

I REMEMBER this Mísha at the age of thirteen. He was a very comely lad with rosy little cheeks and soft little lips (and altogether he was soft and plump), with somewhat prominent, humid eyes; carefully brushed and coifed—a regular little girl!—There was only one thing about him which displeased me: he laughed rarely; but when he did laugh his teeth, which were large, white, and pointed like those of a wild animal, displayed themselves unpleasantly; his very laugh had a sharp and even fierce—almost brutal—ring to it; and evil flashes darted athwart his eyes. His mother always boasted of his being so obedient and polite, and that he was not fond of consorting with naughty boys, but always was more inclined to feminine society.

"He is his mother's son, an effeminate fellow,"

[1] The custom of thus dressing up as bears, clowns, and so forth, and visiting all the houses in the neighbourhood, is still kept up in rustic localities. St. Vasíly's (Basil's) day falls on January 1.—TRANSLATOR.

his father, Andréi Nikoláevitch, was wont to say of him:—"but, on the other hand, he likes to go to God's church. . . . And that delights me."

Only one old neighbour, a former commissary of the rural police, once said in my presence concerning Mísha:—"Good gracious! he will turn out a rebel." And I remember that that word greatly surprised me at the time. The former commissary of police, it is true, had a habit of descrying rebels everywhere.

Just this sort of exemplary youth did Mísha remain until the age of eighteen,—until the death of his parents, whom he lost on almost one and the same day. As I resided constantly in Moscow, I heard nothing about my young relative. Some one who came to town from his government did, it is true, inform me that Mísha had sold his ancestral estate for a song; but this bit of news seemed to me altogether too incredible!—And lo! suddenly, one autumn morning, into the courtyard of my house dashes a calash drawn by a pair of splendid trotters, with a monstrous coachman on the box; and in the calash, wrapped in a cloak of military cut with a two-arshín[1] beaver collar, and a fatigue-cap over one ear—*à la diable m'emporte*—sits Mísha!

On catching sight of me (I was standing at the drawing-room window and staring in amazement at the equipage which had dashed in), he

[1] An arshín is twenty-eight inches.—TRANSLATOR.

burst into his sharp laugh, and jauntily shaking the lapels of his cloak, he sprang out of the calash and ran into the house.

"Mísha! Mikhaíl Andréevitch!" I was beginning . . . "is it you?"

"Call me 'thou' and 'Mísha,'" he interrupted me.—"'T is I . . . 't is I, in person. . . . I have come to Moscow . . . . to take a look at people . . . . and to show myself. So I have dropped in on you.—What do you think of my trotters? . . . Hey?" Again he laughed loudly.

Although seven years had elapsed since I had seen Mísha for the last time, yet I recognised him on the instant.—His face remained thoroughly youthful and as comely as of yore; his moustache had not even sprouted; but under his eyes on his cheeks a puffiness had made its appearance, and an odour of liquor proceeded from his mouth.

"And hast thou been long in Moscow?" I inquired.—"I supposed that thou wert off there in the country, managing thy estate. . . ."

"Eh! I immediately got rid of the village!—As soon as my parents died,—may the kingdom of heaven be theirs,"—(Mísha crossed himself with sincerity, without the slightest hypocrisy)—"I instantly, without the slightest delay . . . *ein, zwei, drei!* Ha-ha! I let it go cheap, the rascally thing! Such a scoundrel turned up.—Well, never mind! At all events, I shall live at

my ease—and amuse others.—But why do you stare at me so?—Do you really think that I ought to have spun the affair out indefinitely? . . . My dear relative, can't I have a drink?"

Mísha talked with frightful rapidity, hurriedly and at the same time as though half asleep.

"Good mercy, Mísha!"—I shouted: "Have the fear of God before thine eyes! How dreadful is thine aspect, in what a condition thou art! And thou wishest another drink! And to sell such a fine estate for a song! . . ."

"I always fear God and remember him," he caught me up.—"And he 's good—God, I mean. . . . He 'll forgive! And I also am good. . . . I have never injured any one in my life as yet. And a drink is good also; and as for hurting . . . . it won't hurt anybody, either. And as for my looks, they are all right. . . . If thou wishest, uncle, I 'll walk a line on the floor. Or shall I dance a bit?"

"Akh, please drop that!—What occasion is there for dancing? Thou hadst better sit down."

"I don't mind sitting down. . . . But why don't you say something about my greys? Just look at them, they 're regular lions! I 'm hiring them for the time being, but I shall certainly buy them together with the coachman. It is incomparably cheaper to own one's horses. And I did have the money, but I dropped it last night at faro.—Never mind, I 'll retrieve my for-

tunes to-morrow. Uncle . . . . how about that drink?"

I still could not collect myself.—"Good gracious! Mísha, how old art thou? Thou shouldst not be occupying thyself with horses, or with gambling . . . thou shouldst enter the university or the service."

Mísha first roared with laughter again, then he emitted a prolonged whistle.

"Well, uncle, I see that thou art in a melancholy frame of mind just now. I 'll call another time.—But see here: just look in at Sokólniki[1] some evening. I have pitched my tent there. The Gipsies sing. . . Well, well! One can hardly restrain himself! And on the tent there is a pennant, and on the pennant is written in bi-i-ig letters: 'The Band of Poltéva[2] Gipsies.' The pennant undulates like a serpent; the letters are gilded; any one can easily read them. The entertainment is whatever any one likes! . . . They refuse nothing. It has kicked up a dust all over Moscow . . . my respects . . . Well? Will you come? I 've got a Gipsy there —a regular asp! Black as my boot, fierce as a dog, and eyes . . . regular coals of fire! One can't possibly make out whether she is kissing or biting. . . . Will you come, uncle? . . . Well, farewell for the present!"

[1] A park for popular resort in the suburbs of Moscow.—Translator.

[2] Incorrectly written for Poltáva.—Translator.

And abruptly embracing me and kissing me with a smack on my shoulder, Mísha darted out into the court to his calash, waving his cap over his head, and uttering a yell; the monstrous coachman [1] bestowed upon him an oblique glance across his beard, the trotters dashed forward, and all disappeared!

On the following day, sinful man that I am, I did go to Sokólniki, and actually did see the tent with the pennant and the inscription. The tent-flaps were raised; an uproar, crashing, squealing, proceeded thence. A crowd of people thronged around it. On the ground, on an outspread rug, sat the Gipsy men and Gipsy women, singing, and thumping tambourines; and in the middle of them, with a guitar in his hands, clad in a red-silk shirt and full trousers of velvet, Mísha was gyrating like a whirligig.—"Gentlemen! Respected sirs! Pray enter! The performance is about to begin! Free!"—he was shouting in a cracked voice.—"Hey there! Champagne! Bang! In the forehead! On the ceiling! Akh, thou rascal, Paul de Kock!"—Luckily, he did not catch sight of me, and I hastily beat a retreat.

I shall not dilate, gentlemen, on my amazement at the sight of such a change. And, as a matter of fact, how could that peaceable, modest lad suddenly turn into a tipsy good-for-no-

[1] The fatter the coachman, the more stylish he is. If he is not fat naturally, he adds cushions under his coat.—TRANSLATOR.

thing? Was it possible that all this had been concealed within him since his childhood, and had immediately come to the surface as soon as the weight of parental authority had been removed from him?—And that he had kicked up a dust in Moscow, as he had expressed it, there could be no possible doubt, either. I had seen rakes in my day; but here something frantic, some frenzy of self-extermination, some sort of recklessness, had made itself manifest!

## III

This diversion lasted for two months. . . And lo! again I am standing at the window of the drawing-room and looking out into the courtyard. . . . Suddenly—what is this? . . . Through the gate with quiet step enters a novice. . . . His conical cap is pulled down on his brow, his hair is combed smoothly and flows from under it to right and left . . . . he wears a long cassock and a leather girdle. . . . Can it be Mísha? It is!

I go out on the steps to meet him. . . . "What is the meaning of this masquerade?" I ask.

"It is not a masquerade, uncle," Mísha answers me, with a deep sigh;—"but as I have squandered all my property to the last kopék, and as a mighty repentance has seized upon me, I have made up my mind to betake myself to

the Tróitzko-Sérgieva Lávra,[1] to pray away my sins. For what asylum is now left to me? . . . And so I have come to bid you farewell, uncle, like the Prodigal Son. . . ."

I gazed intently at Mísha. His face was the same as ever, fresh and rosy (by the way, it never changed to the very end), and his eyes were humid and caressing and languishing, and his hands were small and white. . . . But he reeked of liquor.

"Very well!" I said at last: "It is a good move if there is no other issue. But why dost thou smell of liquor?"

"Old habit," replied Mísha, and suddenly burst out laughing, but immediately caught himself up, and making a straight, low, monastic obeisance, he added:—"Will not you contribute something for the journey? For I am going to the monastery on foot. . . ."

"When?"

"To-day . . . . at once."

"Why art thou in such a hurry?"

"Uncle! my motto has always been 'Hurry! Hurry!'"

"But what is thy motto now?"

"It is the same now. . . . Only '*Hurry*—to good!'"

[1] That is, to the Trinity monastery of the first class founded by St. Sergius in 1340. It is situated about forty miles from Moscow, and is the most famous monastery in the country next to the Catacombs Monastery at Kíeff.—TRANSLATOR.

So Mísha went away, leaving me to meditate over the mutability of human destinies.

But he speedily reminded me of his existence. A couple of months after his visit I received a letter from him,—the first of those letters with which he afterward favoured me. And note this peculiarity: I have rarely beheld a neater, more legible handwriting than was possessed by this unmethodical man. The style of his letters also was very regular, and slightly florid. The invariable appeals for assistance alternated with promises of amendment, with honourable words and with oaths. . . . All this appeared to be—and perhaps was—sincere. Mísha's signature at the end of his letters was always accompanied by peculiar flourishes, lines and dots, and he used a great many exclamation-points. In that first letter Mísha informed me of a new "turn in his fortune." (Later on he called these turns "dives" . . . . and he dived frequently.) He had gone off to the Caucasus to serve the Tzar and fatherland "with his breast," in the capacity of a yunker. And although a certain benevolent aunt had commiserated his poverty-stricken condition and had sent him an insignificant sum, nevertheless he asked me to help him to equip himself. I complied with his request, and for a period of two years thereafter I heard nothing about him. I must confess that I entertained strong doubts as to his having gone to the Caucasus.

But it turned out that he really had gone thither, had entered the T * * * regiment as yunker, through influence, and had served in it those two years. Whole legends were fabricated there about him. One of the officers in his regiment communicated them to me.

## IV

I LEARNED a great deal which I had not expected from him. I was not surprised, of course, that he had proved to be a poor, even a downright worthless military man and soldier; but what I had not expected was, that he had displayed no special bravery; that in battle he wore a dejected and languid aspect, as though he were partly bored, partly daunted. All discipline oppressed him, inspired him with sadness; he was audacious to recklessness when it was a question of himself personally; there was no wager too crazy for him to accept; but do evil to others, kill, fight, he could not, perhaps because he had a good heart,—and perhaps because his "cotton-wool" education (as he expressed it) had enervated him. He was ready to exterminate himself in any sort of way at any time. . . . But others—no. "The devil only can make him out," his comrades said of him:—"he 's puny, a rag—and what a reckless fellow he is—a regular dare-devil!"—I happened afterward to ask Mísha what evil spirit

prompted him, made him indulge in drinking-bouts, risk his life, and so forth. He always had one answer: "Spleen."

"But why hast thou spleen?"

"Just because I have, good gracious! One comes to himself, recovers his senses, and begins to meditate about poverty, about injustice, about Russia. . . . Well, and that settles it! Immediately one feels such spleen that he is ready to send a bullet into his forehead! One goes on a carouse instinctively."

"But why hast thou mixed up Russia with this?"

"What else could I do? Nothing!—That's why I am afraid to think."

"All that—that spleen—comes of thy idleness."

"But I don't know how to do anything, uncle! My dear relative! Here now, if it were a question of taking and staking my life on a card,—losing my all and shooting myself, bang! in the neck!—I can do that!—Here now, tell me what to do, what to risk my life for.—I 'll do it this very minute! . . . ."

"But do thou simply live. . . . Why risk thy life?"

"I can't!—You will tell me that I behave recklessly. What else can I do? . . . One begins to think—and, O Lord, what comes into his head! 'T is only the Germans who think! . . ."

What was the use of arguing with him? He was a reckless man—and that is all there is to say!

I will repeat to you two or three of the Caucasian legends to which I have alluded. One day, in the company of the officers, Mísha began to brag of a Circassian sabre which he had obtained in barter.—"A genuine Persian blade!"—The officers expressed doubt as to whether it were really genuine. Mísha began to dispute.—"See here," he exclaimed at last,—"they say that the finest judge of Circassian sabres is one-eyed Abdulka. I will go to him and ask."—The officers were dumbfounded.

"What Abdulka? The one who lives in the mountains? The one who is not at peace with us? Abdul-Khan?"

"The very man."

"But he will take thee for a scout, he will place thee in the bug-house,—or he will cut off thy head with that same sabre. And how wilt thou make thy way to him? They will seize thee immediately."

"But I will go to him, nevertheless."

"We bet that thou wilt not go!"

"I take your bet!"

And Mísha instantly saddled his horse and rode off to Abdulka. He was gone for three days. All were convinced that he had come to some dreadful end. And behold! he came back,

somewhat tipsy, and with a sabre, only not the one which he had carried away with him, but another. They began to question him.

"It's all right," said he. "Abdulka is a kind man. At first he really did order fetters to be riveted on my legs, and was even preparing to impale me on a stake. But I explained to him why I had come. 'Do not expect any ransom from me,' said I. 'I have n't a farthing to my name—and I have no relatives.'—Abdulka was amazed; he stared at me with his solitary eye.—'Well,' says he, 'thou art the chief of heroes, Russian! Am I to believe thee?'—'Believe me,' said I; 'I never lie' (and Mísha really never did lie).—Abdulka looked at me again.—'And dost thou know how to drink wine?'—'I do,' said I; 'as much as thou wilt give, so much will I drink.'—Again Abdulka was astonished, and mentioned Allah. And then he ordered his daughter, or some pretty maiden, whoever she was,—anyhow, she had the gaze of a jackal,—to fetch a leathern bottle of wine.—And I set to work.—'But thy sabre is spurious,' says he; 'here, take this genuine one. And now thou and I are friends.'—And you have lost your wager, gentlemen, so pay up."

A second legend concerning Mísha runs as follows. He was passionately fond of cards; but as he had no money and did not pay his gambling debts (although he was never a sharper), no one

would any longer sit down to play with him. So one day he began to importune a brother officer, and insisted upon the latter's playing with him.

"But thou wilt be sure to lose, and thou wilt not pay."

"I will not pay in money, that's true—but I will shoot a hole through my left hand with this pistol here!"

"But what profit is there for me in that?"

"No profit whatever—but it's a curious thing, nevertheless."

This conversation took place after a carouse, in the presence of witnesses. Whether Mísha's proposal really did strike the officer as curious or not, —at all events, he consented. The cards were brought, the game began. Mísha was lucky; he won one hundred rubles. And thereupon his opponent smote himself on the forehead.

"What a blockhead I am!" he cried.—"On what a bait was I caught! If thou hadst lost, much thou wouldst have shot thyself through the hand!—so it's just an assault on my pocket!"

"That's where thou art mistaken," retorted Mísha:—"I have won—but I'll shoot the hole through my hand."

He seized his pistol, and bang! shot himself through the hand. The bullet went clear through .... and a week later the wound was completely healed!

On another occasion still, Mísha is riding

along the road by night with his comrades. . . . And they see yawning, right by the side of the road, a narrow ravine in the nature of a cleft, dark, very dark, and the bottom of it not visible.

"Here now," says one comrade, "Mísha is reckless enough about some things, but he will not leap into this ravine."

"Yes, I will!"

"No, thou wilt not, because it is, probably, ten fathoms deep, and thou mightest break thy neck."

His friend knew how to attack him—through his vanity. . . . Mísha had a great deal of it.

"But I will leap, nevertheless! Wilt thou bet on it? Ten rubles."

"All right!"

And before his comrade had managed to finish the last word Mísha flew off his horse into the ravine, and crashed down on the stones. They were all fairly petrified with horror. . . . A good minute passed, and they heard Mísha's voice proceeding as though from the bowels of the earth, and very dull:

"I 'm whole! I landed on sand. . . But the descent was long! Ten rubles on you!"

"Climb out!" shouted his comrades.

"Yes, climb out!"—returned Mísha. "Damn it! One can't climb out of here! You will have to ride off now for ropes and lanterns. And in the meanwhile, so that I may not find the waiting tedious, toss me down a flask. . . ."

And so Mísha had to sit for five hours at the bottom of the ravine; and when they dragged him out, it appeared that he had a dislocated shoulder. But this did not daunt him in the least. On the following day a blacksmith bone-setter set his shoulder, and he used it as though nothing were the matter.

Altogether, his health was remarkable, unprecedented. I have already told you that until his death he preserved an almost childish freshness of complexion. He did not know what it was to be ill, in spite of all his excesses; the vigour of his constitution was not affected in a single instance. Where any other man would have fallen dangerously ill, or even have died, he merely shook himself like a duck in the water, and became more blooming than ever. Once—that also was in the Caucasus. . . . This legend is improbable, it is true, but from it one can judge what Mísha was regarded as capable of doing. . . . So then, once, in the Caucasus, when in a state of intoxication, he fell into a small stream that covered the lower part of his body; his head and arms remained exposed on the bank. The affair took place in winter; a rigorous frost set in; and when he was found on the following morning, his legs and body were visible beneath a stout crust of ice which had frozen over in the course of the night —and he never even had a cold in the head in consequence! On another occasion (this hap-

pened in Russia, near Orél,[1] and also during a severe frost), he chanced to go to a suburban eating-house in company with seven young theological students. These theological students were celebrating their graduation examination, and had invited Mísha, as a charming fellow, "a man with a sigh," as it was called then. They drank a great deal; and when, at last, the merry crew were preparing to depart, Mísha, dead drunk, was found to be already in a state of unconsciousness. The whole seven theological students had between them only one tróika sledge with a high back;[2]—where were they to put the helpless body? Then one of the young men, inspired by classical reminiscences, suggested that Mísha be tied by the feet to the back of the sledge, as Hector was to the chariot of Achilles! The suggestion was approved . . . . and bouncing over the hummocks, sliding sideways down the declivities, with his feet strung up in the air, and his head dragging through the snow, our Mísha traversed on his back the distance of two versts which separated the restaurant from the town, and never even so much as coughed or frowned. With such marvellous health had nature endowed him!

[1] Pronounced *Aryól*.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Such a sledge, drawn by the national team of three horses, will hold five or six persons closely packed.—TRANSLATOR.

# A RECKLESS CHARACTER

## V

LEAVING the Caucasus, he presented himself once more in Moscow, in a Circassian coat, with cartridge-pouches on the breast, a dagger in his belt, and a tall fur cap on his head. From this costume he did not part until the end, although he was no longer in the military service, from which he had been dismissed for not reporting on time. He called on me, borrowed a little money . . . . and then began his "divings," his progress through the tribulations,[1] or, as he expressed it, "through the seven Semyóns";[2] then began his sudden ab-

[1] The word he used, *mytárstvo*, has a peculiar meaning. It refers specifically to the experiences of the soul when it leaves the body. According to the teaching of divers ancient fathers of the church, the soul, as soon as it leaves the body, is confronted by accusing demons, who arraign it with all the sins, great and small, which it has committed during its earthly career. If its good deeds, alms, prayers, and so forth (added to the grace of God), offset the evil, the demons are forced to renounce their claims. These demons assault the soul in relays, each "trial," "suffering," or "tribulation" being a *mytárstvo*. One ancient authority enumerates twenty such trials. The soul is accompanied and defended in its trials by angels, who plead its cause. Eventually, they conduct it into the presence of God, who then assigns to it a temporary abode of bliss or woe until the day of judgment. The derivation of this curious and utterly untranslatable word is as follows: *Mytár* means a publican or tax-gatherer. As the publicans, under the Roman sway over the Jews, indulged in various sorts of violence, abuses, and inhuman conduct, calling every one to strict account, and even stationing themselves at the city gates to intercept all who came and went, *mytárstvo* represents, in general, the taxing or testing of the soul, which must pay a ransom before it is released from its trials and preliminary tribulations.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] A folk-tale narrates how the Tzar Arkhídei obtained his beauteous bride by the aid of seven brothers called "The Seven

sences and returns, the despatching of beautifully-written letters addressed to all possible persons, beginning with the Metropolitan and ending with riding-masters and midwives! Then began the visits to acquaintances and strangers! And here is one point which must be noted: in making his calls he did not cringe and did not importune; but, on the contrary, he behaved himself in decorous fashion, and even wore a cheery and pleasant aspect, although an ingrained odour of liquor accompanied him everywhere—and his Oriental costume was gradually reduced to rags.

"Give—God will reward you—although I do not deserve it," he was accustomed to say, smiling brightly and blushing openly. "If you do not give, you will be entirely in the right, and I shall not be angry in the least. I shall support myself. God will provide! For there are many, very many people who are poorer and more worthy than I!"

Mísha enjoyed particular success with women; he understood how to arouse their compassion. And do not think that he was or imagined himself to be a Lovelace. . . Oh, no! In that respect he was very modest. Whether he had inherited from his parents such cold blood, or whether herein was expressed his disinclination to do evil to any one,

Semyóns," who were his peasants. The bride was distant a ten years' journey; but each of the brothers had a different "trade," by the combined means of which they were enabled to overcome time and space and get the bride for their master.—TRANSLATOR.

—since, according to his ideas, to consort with a woman means inevitably to insult the woman,—I will not take it upon myself to decide; only, in his relations with the fair sex he was extremely delicate. The women felt this, and all the more willingly did they pity and aid him until he, at last, repelled them by his sprees and hard drinking, by the recklessness of which I have already spoken. . . . I cannot hit upon any other word.

On the other hand, in other respects he had already lost all delicacy and had gradually descended to the extreme depths of degradation. He once went so far that in the Assembly of Nobility of T * * * he placed on the table a jug with the inscription:

"Any one who finds it agreeable to tweak the nose of hereditary nobleman[1] Pólteff (whose authentic documents are herewith appended) may satisfy his desire, on condition that he puts a ruble in this jug."

And it is said that there were persons who did care to tweak the nobleman's nose! It is true that he first all but throttled one amateur who, having put but one ruble in the jug, tweaked his nose twice, and then made him sue for pardon; it is true also that he immediately distributed to other tatterdemalions a portion of the money thus se-

[1] The word used in Russian indicates not only that he was a hereditary noble, but that his nobility was ancient—a matter of some moment in a country where nobility, both personal and hereditary, can be won in the service of the state.—TRANSLATOR.

cured . . . . but, nevertheless, what outrageous conduct!

In the course of his wanderings through the seven Semyóns he had also reached his ancestral nest, which he had sold for a song to a speculator and usurer well known at that period. The speculator was at home, and on learning of the arrival of the former owner, who had been transformed into a tramp, he gave orders that he was not to be admitted into the house, and that in case of need he was to be flung out by the scruff of the neck. Mísha declared that he would not enter the house, defiled as it was by the presence of a scoundrel; that he would allow no one to throw him out; but that he was on his way to the churchyard to salute the dust of his ancestors. This he did. At the churchyard he was joined by an old house-serf, who had formerly been his man-nurse. The speculator had deprived the old man of his monthly stipend and expelled him from the home farm; from that time forth the man sought shelter in the kennel of a peasant. Mísha had managed his estate for so short a time that he had not succeeded in leaving behind him a specially good memory of himself; but the old servitor had not been able to resist, nevertheless, and on hearing of his young master's arrival, he had immediately hastened to the churchyard, had found Mísha seated on the ground among the mortuary stones, had begged leave to kiss his hand in memory of

old times, and had even melted into tears as he gazed at the rags wherewith the once petted limbs of his nursling were swathed. Mísha looked long and in silence at the old man.

"Timoféi!" he said at last.

Timoféi gave a start.

"What do you wish?"

"Hast thou a spade?"

"I can get one. . . . But what do you want with a spade, Mikhaílo Andréitch?"

"I want to dig a grave for myself here, Timoféi; and lie down here forever between my parents. For this is the only spot which is left to me in the world. Fetch the spade!"

"I obey," said Timoféi; and went off and brought it.

And Mísha immediately began to dig up the earth, while Timoféi stood by with his chin propped on his hand, repeating: "That 's the only thing left for thee and me, master!"

And Mísha dug and dug, inquiring from time to time: "Life is n't worth living, is it, Timoféi?"

"It is not, dear little father."

The hole had already grown fairly deep. People saw Mísha's work and ran to report about it to the speculator-owner. At first the speculator flew into a rage, and wanted to send for the police. "What hypocrisy!" he said. But afterward, reflecting, probably, that it would be inconvenient to have a row with that lunatic, and that a scandal

might be the result, he betook himself in person to the churchyard, and approaching the toiling Mísha, he made a polite obeisance to him. The latter continued to dig, as though he had not noticed his successor.

"Mikhaíl Andréitch," began the speculator, "permit me to inquire what you are doing there?"

"As you see—I am digging a grave for myself."

"Why are you doing that?"

"Because I do not wish to live any longer."

The speculator fairly flung apart his hands in surprise.—"You do not wish to live?"

Mísha cast a menacing glance at the speculator:—"Does that surprise you? Are not you the cause of it all? . . . Is it not you? . . . Is it not thou?[1] . . . Is it not thou, Judas, who hast robbed me, by taking advantage of my youth? Dost not thou skin the peasants? Is it not thou who hast deprived this decrepit old man of his daily bread? Is it not thou? . . . O Lord! Everywhere there is injustice, and oppression, and villainy. . . . So down with everything,—and with me also! I don't wish to live—I don't wish to live any longer in Russia!"—And the spade made swifter progress than ever in Mísha's hands.

"The devil knows the meaning of this!"

[1] The change to *thou* is made to express disrespect.—TRANSLATOR.

thought the speculator: "he actually is burying himself." — "Mikhaíl Andréitch," — he began afresh, "listen; I really am guilty toward you; people did not represent you properly to me."

Mísha went on digging.

"But why this recklessness?"

Mísha went on digging—and flung the dirt on the speculator, as much as to say: "Take that, earth-devourer!"

"Really, you have no cause for this. Will not you come to my house to eat and rest?"

Mísha raised his head a little. "Now you 're talking! And will there be anything to drink?"

The speculator was delighted.—"Good gracious! . . . . I should think so!"

"And dost thou invite Timoféi also?"

"But why . . . . well, I invite him also."

Mísha reflected.—"Only look out . . . . for thou didst turn me out of doors. . . . Don't think thou art going to get off with one bottle!"

"Do not worry . . . . there will be as much as you wish of everything."

Mísha flung aside his spade. . . . "Well, Timósha," he said, addressing his old man-nurse, "let us honour the host. . . . Come along!"

"I obey," replied the old man.

And all three wended their way toward the house.

The speculator knew with whom he had to deal. Mísha made him promise as a preliminary, it is

true, that he would "allow all privileges" to the peasants;—but an hour later that same Mísha, together with Timoféi, both drunk, danced a gallopade through those rooms where the pious shade of Andréi Nikoláitch seemed still to be hovering; and an hour later still, Mísha, so sound asleep that he could not be waked (liquor was his great weakness), was placed in a peasant-cart, together with his kazák cap and his dagger, and sent off to the town, five-and-twenty versts distant,—and there was found under a fence. . . . Well, and Timoféi, who still kept his feet and merely hiccoughed, was "pitched out neck and crop," as a matter of course. The master had made a failure of his attempt. So they might as well let the servant pay the penalty!

## VI

AGAIN considerable time elapsed and I heard nothing of Mísha. . . . God knows where he had vanished.—One day, as I was sitting before the samovár at a posting-station on the T * * * highway, waiting for horses, I suddenly heard, under the open window of the station-room, a hoarse voice uttering in French:—"*Monsieur . . . . monsieur . . . . prenez pitié d'un pauvre gentilhomme ruiné!*" . . . . I raised my head and looked. . . . The kazák cap with the fur peeled off, the broken cartridge-pouches on the tattered

Circassian coat, the dagger in a cracked sheath, the bloated but still rosy face, the dishevelled but still thick hair. . . . My God! It was Mísha! He had already come to begging alms on the highways!—I involuntarily uttered an exclamation. He recognised me, shuddered, turned away, and was about to withdraw from the window. I stopped him . . . . but what was there that I could say to him? Certainly I could not read him a lecture! . . . In silence I offered him a five-ruble bank-note. With equal silence he grasped it in his still white and plump, though trembling and dirty hand, and disappeared round the corner of the house.

They did not furnish me with horses very promptly, and I had time to indulge in cheerless meditations on the subject of my unexpected encounter with Misha. I felt conscience-stricken that I had let him go in so unsympathetic a manner.—At last I proceeded on my journey, and after driving half a verst from the posting-station I observed, ahead of me on the road, a crowd of people moving along with a strange and as it were measured tread. I overtook this crowd,—and what did I see?—Twelve beggars, with wallets on their shoulders, were walking by twos, singing and skipping as they went,—and at their head danced Mísha, stamping time with his feet and saying: "Natchiki-tchikaldi, tchuk-

tchuk-tchuk! Natchiki-tchikaldi, tchuk-tchuk-tchuk!"

As soon as my calash came on a level with him, and he caught sight of me, he immediately began to shout, "Hurrah! Halt, draw up in line! Eyes front, my guard of the road!"

The beggars took up his cry and halted,—while he, with his habitual laugh, sprang upon the carriage-step, and again yelled: "Hurrah!"

"What is the meaning of this?" I asked, with involuntary amazement.

"This? This is my squad, my army; all beggars, God's people, my friends! Each one of them, thanks to your kindness, has quaffed a cup of liquor: and now we are all rejoicing and making merry! . . . Uncle! 'T is only with the beggars and God's poor that one can live in the world, you know . . . . by God, that 's so!"

I made him no reply . . . but this time he seemed to me such a good-natured soul, his face expressed such childlike ingenuousness . . . a light suddenly seemed to dawn upon me, and there came a prick at my heart. . . .

"Get into the calash with me," I said to him.

He was amazed. . . .

"What? Get into the calash?"

"Get in, get in!" I repeated. "I want to make thee a proposition. Get in! . . . Drive on with me."

"Well, you command."—He got in.—"Come,

and as for you, my dear friends, respected comrades," he added to the beggars: "good-bye! Until we meet again!"—Mísha took off his kazák cap and made a low bow.—The beggars all seemed to be dumbfounded. . . I ordered the coachman to whip up the horses, and the calash rolled on.

This is what I wished to propose to Mísha: the idea had suddenly occurred to me to take him into my establishment, into my country-house, which was situated about thirty versts from that posting-station,—to save him, or, at least, to make an effort to save him.

"Hearken, Mísha," said I; "wilt thou settle down with me? . . . Thou shalt have everything provided for thee, clothes and under-linen shall be made for thee, thou shalt be properly fitted out, and thou shalt receive money for tobacco and so forth, only on one condition: not to drink liquor! . . . . Dost thou accept?"

Mísha was even frightened with joy. He opened his eyes very wide, turned crimson, and suddenly falling on my shoulder, he began to kiss me and to repeat in a spasmodic voice:—"Uncle . . . benefactor . . . May God reward you! . . ." He melted into tears at last, and doffing his kazák cap, began to wipe his eyes, his nose, and his lips with it.

"Look out," I said to him. "Remember the condition—not to drink liquor!"

"Why, damn it!" he exclaimed, flourishing both hands, and as a result of that energetic movement I was still more strongly flooded with that spirituous odour wherewith he was thoroughly impregnated. . . . "You see, dear uncle, if you only knew my life. . . . If it were not for grief, cruel Fate, you know. . . . But now I swear,—I swear that I will reform, and will prove . . . . Uncle, I have never lied—ask any one you like if I have. . . . I am an honourable, but an unhappy man, uncle; I have never known kindness from any one. . . ."

At this point he finally dissolved in sobs. I tried to soothe him and succeeded, for when we drove up to my house Mísha had long been sleeping the sleep of the dead, with his head resting on my knees.

## VII

He was immediately allotted a special room, and also immediately, as the first measure, taken to the bath, which was absolutely indispensable. All his garments, and his dagger and tall kazák cap and hole-ridden shoes, were carefully laid away in the storehouse; clean linen was put on him, slippers, and some of my clothing, which, as is always the case with paupers, exactly fitted his build and stature. When he came to the table, washed, neat, fresh, he seemed so much touched,

and so happy, he was beaming all over with such joyful gratitude, that I felt emotion and joy. . . . . His face was completely transfigured. Little boys of twelve wear such faces at Easter, after the Communion, when, thickly pomaded, clad in new round-jackets and starched collars, they go to exchange the Easter greeting with their parents. Mísha kept feeling of himself cautiously and incredulously, and repeating:—"What is this? . . . . Am not I in heaven?"—And on the following day he announced that he had not been able to sleep all night for rapture!

In my house there was then living an aged aunt with her niece. They were both greatly agitated when they heard of Mísha's arrival; they did not understand how I could have invited him to my house! He bore a very bad reputation. But, in the first place, I knew that he was always very polite to ladies; and, in the second place, I trusted to his promise to reform. And, as a matter of fact, during the early days of his sojourn under my roof Mísha not only justified my expectations, but exceeded them; and he simply enchanted my ladies. He played picquet with the old lady; he helped her to wind yarn; he showed her two new games of patience; he accompanied the niece, who had a small voice, on the piano; he read her French and Russian poetry; he narrated diverting but decorous anec-

dotes to both ladies;—in a word, he was serviceable to them in all sorts of ways, so that they repeatedly expressed to me their surprise, while the old woman even remarked: "How unjust people sometimes are! . . . What all have not they said about him . . . while he is so discreet and polite . . . . poor Mísha!"

It is true that at table "poor Mísha" licked his lips in a peculiarly-hasty way every time he even looked at a bottle. But all I had to do was to shake my finger, and he would roll up his eyes, and press his hand to his heart . . . as much as to say: "I have sworn. . . ."

"I am regenerated now!" he assured me.—"Well, God grant it!" I thought to myself. . . . . But this regeneration did not last long.

During the early days he was very loquacious and jolly. But beginning with the third day he quieted down, somehow, although, as before, he kept close to the ladies and amused them. A half-sad, half-thoughtful expression began to flit across his face, and the face itself grew pale and thin.

"Art thou ill?" I asked him.

"Yes," he answered;—"my head aches a little."

On the fourth day he became perfectly silent; he sat in a corner most of the time, with dejectedly drooping head; and by his downcast aspect evoked a feeling of compassion in the two ladies,

who now, in their turn, tried to divert him. At table he ate nothing, stared at his plate, and rolled bread-balls. On the fifth day the feeling of pity in the ladies began to be replaced by another—by distrust and even fear. Mísha had grown wild, he avoided people and kept walking along the wall, as though creeping stealthily, and suddenly darting glances around him, as though some one had called him. And what had become of his rosy complexion? It seemed to be covered with earth.

"Art thou still ill?" I asked him.

"No; I am well," he answered abruptly.

"Art thou bored?"

"Why should I be bored?"—But he turned away and would not look me in the eye.

"Or hast thou grown melancholy again?"—To this he made no reply.

On the following day my aunt ran into my study in a state of great excitement, and declared that she and her niece would leave my house if Mísha were to remain in it.

"Why so?"

"Why, we feel afraid of him. . . . He is not a man,—he is a wolf, a regular wolf. He stalks and stalks about, saying never a word, and has such a wild look. . . . He all but gnashes his teeth. My Kátya is such a nervous girl, as thou knowest. . . . She took a great interest in him the first day. . . . I am afraid for her and for myself. . . ."

I did not know what reply to make to my aunt. But I could not expel Mísha, whom I had invited in.

He himself extricated me from this dilemma.

That very day—before I had even left my study—I suddenly heard a dull and vicious voice behind me.

"Nikolái Nikoláitch, hey there, Nikolái Nikoláitch!"

I looked round. In the doorway stood Mísha, with a terrible, lowering, distorted visage.

"Nikolái Nikoláitch," he repeated . . . . (it was no longer "dear uncle").

"What dost thou want?"

"Let me go . . . . this very moment!"

"What?"

"Let me go, or I shall commit a crime,—set the house on fire or cut some one's throat."—Mísha suddenly fell to shaking.—"Order them to restore my garments, and give me a cart to carry me to the highway, and give me a trifling sum of money!"

"But art thou dissatisfied with anything?" I began.

"I cannot live thus!" he roared at the top of his voice.—"I cannot live in your lordly, thrice-damned house! I hate, I am ashamed to live so tranquilly! . . . How do *you* manage to endure it?!"

"In other words," I interposed, "thou wishest to say that thou canst not live without liquor. . . ."

"Well, yes! well, yes!" he yelled again.—"Only let me go to my brethren, to my friends, to the beggars! . . . Away from your noble, decorous, repulsive race!"

I wanted to remind him of his promise on oath, but the criminal expression of Mísha's face, his unrestrained voice, the convulsive trembling of all his limbs—all this was so frightful that I made haste to get rid of him. I informed him that he should receive his clothing at once, that a cart should be harnessed for him; and taking from a casket a twenty-ruble bank-note, I laid it on the table. Mísha was already beginning to advance threateningly upon me, but now he suddenly stopped short, his face instantaneously became distorted, and flushed up; he smote his breast, tears gushed from his eyes, and he stammered,—"Uncle!—Angel! I am a lost man, you see!—Thanks! Thanks!"—He seized the bank-note and rushed out of the room.

An hour later he was already seated in a cart, again clad in his Circassian coat, again rosy and jolly; and when the horses started off he uttered a yell, tore off his tall kazák cap, and waving it above his head, he made bow after bow. Immediately before his departure he embraced me long and warmly, stammering:—"Benefactor, benefactor! . . . . It was impossible to save me!" He even ran in to see the ladies, and kissed their hands over and over again, went down on

his knees, appealed to God, and begged forgiveness! I found Kátya in tears later on.

But the coachman who had driven Mísha reported to me, on his return, that he had taken him to the first drinking establishment on the highway, and that there he "had got stranded," had begun to stand treat to every one without distinction, and had soon arrived at a state of inebriation.

Since that time I have never met Mísha, but I learned his final fate in the following manner.

## VIII

THREE years later I again found myself in the country; suddenly a servant entered and announced that Madame Pólteff was inquiring for me. I knew no Madame Pólteff, and the servant who made the announcement was grinning in a sarcastic sort of way, for some reason or other. In reply to my questioning glance he said that the lady who was asking for me was young, poorly clad, and had arrived in a peasant-cart drawn by one horse which she was driving herself! I ordered that Madame Pólteff should be requested to do me the favour to step into my study.

I beheld a woman of five-and-twenty,—belonging to the petty burgher class, to judge from her attire,—with a large kerchief on her head.

Her face was simple, rather round in contour, not devoid of agreeability; her gaze was downcast and rather melancholy, her movements were embarrassed.

"Are you Madame Pólteff?" I asked, inviting her to be seated.

"Just so, sir," she answered, in a low voice, and without sitting down.—"I am the widow of your nephew, Mikhaíl Andréevitch Pólteff."

"Is Mikhaíl Andréevitch dead? Has he been dead long?—But sit down, I beg of you."

She dropped down on a chair.

"This is the second month since he died."

"And were you married to him long ago?"

"I lived with him one year in all."

"And whence come you now?"

"I come from the vicinity of Túla. . . . There is a village there called Známenskoe-Glúshkovo —perhaps you deign to know it. I am the daughter of the sexton there. Mikhaíl Andréitch and I lived there. . . . He settled down with my father. We lived together a year in all." The young woman's lips twitched slightly, and she raised her hand to them. She seemed to be getting ready to cry, but conquered herself, and cleared her throat.

"The late Mikhaíl Andréitch, before his death," she went on, "bade me go to you. 'Be sure to go,' he said. And he told me that I was to thank you for all your goodness, and transmit

to you . . . . this . . . . trifle" (she drew from her pocket a small package), "which he always carried on his person. . . . And Mikhaíl Andréitch said, would n't you be so kind as to accept it in memory—that you must not scorn it. . . . . 'I have nothing else to give him,' . . . meaning you . . . he said. . . ."

In the packet was a small silver cup with the monogram of Mikhaíl's mother. This tiny cup I had often seen in Mikhaíl's hands; and once he had even said to me, in speaking of a pauper, that he must be stripped bare, since he had neither cup nor bowl, "while I have this here," he said.

I thanked her, took the cup and inquired, "Of what malady did Mikhaíl Andréitch die?—Probably . . . ."

Here I bit my tongue . . . . but the young woman understood my unspoken thought. . . . She darted a swift glance at me, then dropped her eyes, smiled sadly, and immediately said: "Akh, no! He had abandoned that entirely from the time he made my acquaintance. . . . Only, what health had he?! . . . It was utterly ruined. As soon as he gave up drinking his malady immediately manifested itself. He became so steady: he was always wanting to help my father, either in the household affairs, or in the vegetable garden . . . or whatever other work happened to be on hand . . . . in spite of the

fact that he was of noble birth. Only, where was he to get the strength? . . . And he would have liked to busy himself in the department of writing also,—he knew how to do that beautifully, as you are aware; but his hands shook so, and he could not hold the pen properly. . . . He was always reproaching himself: 'I 'm an idle dog,' he said. 'I have done no one any good, I have helped no one, I have not toiled!' He was very much afflicted over that same. . . . He used to say, 'Our people toil, but what are we doing? . . .' Akh, Nikolái Nikoláitch, he was a fine man—and he loved me . . . . and I . . . . Akh, forgive me. . . ."

Here the young woman actually burst into tears. I would have liked to comfort her, but I did not know how.

"Have you a baby?" I asked at last.

She sighed.—"No, I have not. . . . How could I have?"—And here tears streamed worse than before.

So this was the end of Mísha's wanderings through tribulations [old P. concluded his story]. —You will agree with me, gentlemen, as a matter of course, that I had a right to call him reckless; but you will probably also agree with me that he did not resemble the reckless fellows of the present day, although we must suppose that any philosopher would find traits of simi-

larity between him and them. In both cases there is the thirst for self-annihilation, melancholy, dissatisfaction. . . . And what that springs from I will permit precisely that philosopher to decide.

# THE DREAM

(1876)

# THE DREAM

## I

I WAS living with my mother at the time, in a small seaport town. I was just turned seventeen, and my mother was only thirty-five; she had married very young. When my father died I was only seven years old; but I remembered him well. My mother was a short, fair-haired woman, with a charming, but permanently-sad face, a quiet, languid voice, and timid movements. In her youth she had borne the reputation of a beauty, and as long as she lived she remained attractive and pretty. I have never beheld more profound, tender, and melancholy eyes. I adored her, and she loved me. . . . But our life was not cheerful; it seemed as though some mysterious, incurable and undeserved sorrow were constantly sapping the root of her existence. This sorrow could not be explained by grief for my father alone, great as that was, passionately as my mother had loved him, sacredly as she cherished his memory. . . . No! there was something else hidden there which I did not understand, but which I felt,—felt con-

fusedly and strongly as soon as I looked at those quiet, impassive eyes, at those very beautiful but also impassive lips, which were not bitterly compressed, but seemed to have congealed for good and all.

I have said that my mother loved me; but there were moments when she spurned me, when my presence was burdensome, intolerable to her. At such times she felt, as it were, an involuntary aversion for me—and was terrified afterward, reproaching herself with tears and clasping me to her heart. I attributed these momentary fits of hostility to her shattered health, to her unhappiness. . . . These hostile sentiments might have been evoked, it is true, in a certain measure, by some strange outbursts, which were incomprehensible even to me myself, of wicked and criminal feelings which occasionally arose in me. . . .

But these outbursts did not coincide with the moments of repulsion.—My mother constantly wore black, as though she were in mourning. We lived on a rather grand scale, although we associated with no one.

## II

My mother concentrated upon me all her thoughts and cares. Her life was merged in my life. Such relations between parents and children are not always good for the children . . . .

they are more apt to be injurious. Moreover I was my mother's only child . . . . and only children generally develop irregularly. In rearing them the parents do not think of themselves so much as they do of them. . . That is not practical. I did not get spoiled, and did not grow obstinate (both these things happen with only children), but my nerves were unstrung before their time; in addition to which I was of rather feeble health—I took after my mother, to whom I also bore a great facial resemblance. I shunned the society of lads of my own age; in general, I was shy of people; I even talked very little with my mother. I was fonder of reading than of anything else, and of walking alone—and dreaming, dreaming! What my dreams were about it would be difficult to say. It sometimes seemed to me as though I were standing before a half-open door behind which were concealed hidden secrets,—standing and waiting, and swooning with longing—yet not crossing the threshold; and always meditating as to what there was yonder ahead of me—and always waiting and longing . . . . or falling into slumber. If the poetic vein had throbbed in me I should, in all probability, have taken to writing verses; if I had felt an inclination to religious devoutness I might have become a monk; but there was nothing of the sort about me, and I continued to dream—and to wait.

## III

I HAVE just mentioned that I sometimes fell asleep under the inspiration of obscure thoughts and reveries. On the whole, I slept a great deal, and dreams played a prominent part in my life; I beheld visions almost every night. I did not forget them, I attributed to them significance, I regarded them as prophetic, I strove to divine their secret import. Some of them were repeated from time to time, which always seemed to me wonderful and strange. I was particularly perturbed by one dream. It seems to me that I am walking along a narrow, badly-paved street in an ancient town, between many-storied houses of stone, with sharp-pointed roofs. I am seeking my father who is not dead, but is, for some reason, hiding from us, and is living in one of those houses. And so I enter a low, dark gate, traverse a long courtyard encumbered with beams and planks, and finally make my way into a small chamber with two circular windows. In the middle of the room stands my father, clad in a dressing-gown and smoking a pipe. He does not in the least resemble my real father: he is tall, thin, black-haired, he has a hooked nose, surly, piercing eyes; in appearance he is about forty years of age. He is displeased because I have hunted him up; and I also am not in the least delighted at the meeting—and I stand still,

in perplexity. He turns away slightly, begins to mutter something and to pace to and fro with short steps. . . . Then he retreats a little, without ceasing to mutter, and keeps constantly casting glances behind him, over his shoulder; the room widens out and vanishes in a fog. . . . I suddenly grow terrified at the thought that I am losing my father again. I rush after him—but I no longer see him, and can only hear his angry, bear-like growl. . . . My heart sinks within me. I wake up, and for a long time cannot get to sleep again. . . . All the following day I think about that dream and, of course, am unable to arrive at any conclusion.

## IV

THE month of June had come. The town in which my mother and I lived became remarkably animated at that season. A multitude of vessels arrived at the wharves, a multitude of new faces presented themselves on the streets. I loved at such times to stroll along the quay, past the coffee-houses and inns, to scan the varied faces of the sailors and other people who sat under the canvas awnings, at little white tables with pewter tankards filled with beer.

One day, as I was passing in front of a coffee-house, I caught sight of a man who immediately engrossed my entire attention. Clad in a long black coat of peasant cut, with a straw hat pulled

down over his eyes, he was sitting motionless, with his arms folded on his chest. Thin rings of black hair descended to his very nose; his thin lips gripped the stem of a short pipe. This man seemed so familiar to me, every feature of his swarthy, yellow face, his whole figure, were so indubitably stamped on my memory, that I could not do otherwise than halt before him, could not help putting to myself the question: "Who is this man? Where have I seen him?" He probably felt my intent stare, for he turned his black, piercing eyes upon me. . . . I involuntarily uttered a cry of surprise. . . .

This man was the father whom I had sought out, whom I had beheld in my dream!

There was no possibility of making a mistake, —the resemblance was too striking. Even the long-skirted coat, which enveloped his gaunt limbs, reminded me, in colour and form, of the dressing-gown in which my father had presented himself to me.

"Am not I dreaming?" I thought to myself. . . . . "No. . . . It is daylight now, a crowd is roaring round me, the sun is shining brightly in the blue sky, and I have before me, not a phantom, but a living man."

I stepped up to an empty table, ordered myself a tankard of beer and a newspaper, and seated myself at a short distance from this mysterious being.

## V

PLACING the sheets of the newspaper on a level with my face, I continued to devour the stranger with my eyes.—He hardly stirred, and only raised his drooping head a little from time to time. He was evidently waiting for some one. I gazed and gazed. . . . Sometimes it seemed to me that I had invented the whole thing, that in reality there was no resemblance whatever, that I had yielded to the semi-involuntary deception of the imagination . . . . but "he" would suddenly turn a little on his chair, raise his hand slightly, and again I almost cried aloud, again I beheld before me my "nocturnal" father! At last he noticed my importunate attention, and, first with surprise, then with vexation, he glanced in my direction, started to rise, and knocked down a small cane which he had leaned against the table. I instantly sprang to my feet, picked it up and handed it to him. My heart was beating violently.

He smiled in a constrained way, thanked me, and putting his face close to my face, he elevated his eyebrows and parted his lips a little, as though something had struck him.

"You are very polite, young man," he suddenly began, in a dry, sharp, snuffling voice.—"That is a rarity nowadays. Allow me to congratulate you. You have been well brought up."

I do not remember precisely what answer I made to him; but the conversation between us was started. I learned that he was a fellow-countryman of mine, that he had recently returned from America, where he had lived many years, and whither he was intending to return shortly. He said his name was Baron . . . . I did not catch the name well. He, like my "nocturnal" father, wound up each of his remarks with an indistinct, inward growl. He wanted to know my name. . . . On hearing it he again showed signs of surprise. Then he asked me if I had been living long in that town, and with whom? I answered him that I lived with my mother.

"And your father?"

"My father died long ago."

He inquired my mother's Christian name, and immediately burst into an awkward laugh—and then excused himself, saying that he had that American habit, and that altogether he was a good deal of an eccentric. Then he asked where we lived. I told him.

## VI

THE agitation which had seized upon me at the beginning of our conversation had gradually subsided; I thought our intimacy rather strange —that was all. I did not like the smile with

which the baron questioned me; neither did I like the expression of his eyes when he fairly stabbed them into me. . . . There was about them something rapacious and condescending . . . . something which inspired dread. I had not seen those eyes in my dream. The baron had a strange face! It was pallid, fatigued, and, at the same time, youthful in appearance, but with a disagreeable youthfulness! Neither had my "nocturnal" father that deep scar, which intersected his whole forehead in a slanting direction, and which I did not notice until I moved closer to him.

Before I had had time to impart to the baron the name of the street and the number of the house where we lived, a tall negro, wrapped up in a cloak to his very eyes, approached him from behind and tapped him softly on the shoulder. The baron turned round, said: "Aha! At last!" and nodding lightly to me, entered the coffee-house with the negro. I remained under the awning. I wished to wait until the baron should come out again, not so much for the sake of entering again into conversation with him (I really did not know what topic I could start with), as for the purpose of again verifying my first impression.—But half an hour passed; an hour passed. . . . The baron did not make his appearance. I entered the coffee-house, I made the circuit of all the rooms—but nowhere did I

see either the baron or the negro. . . . Both of them must have taken their departure through the back door.

My head had begun to ache a little, and with the object of refreshing myself I set out along the seashore to the extensive park outside the town, which had been laid out ten years previously. After having strolled for a couple of hours in the shade of the huge oaks and plaintain-trees, I returned home.

## VII

Our maid-servant flew to meet me, all tremulous with agitation, as soon as I made my appearance in the anteroom. I immediately divined, from the expression of her face, that something unpleasant had occurred in our house during my absence.—And, in fact, I learned that half an hour before a frightful shriek had rung out from my mother's bedroom. When the maid rushed in she found her on the floor in a swoon which lasted for several minutes. My mother had recovered consciousness at last, but had been obliged to go to bed, and wore a strange, frightened aspect; she had not uttered a word, she had not replied to questions—she had done nothing but glance around her and tremble. The servant had sent the gardener for a doctor. The doctor had come and had prescribed a soothing

potion, but my mother had refused to say anything to him either. The gardener asserted that a few moments after the shriek had rung out from my mother's room he had seen a strange man run hastily across the flower-plots of the garden to the street gate. (We lived in a one-story house, whose windows looked out upon a fairly large garden.) The gardener had not been able to get a good look at the man's face; but the latter was gaunt, and wore a straw hat and a long-skirted coat. . . . "The baron's costume!" immediately flashed into my head. —The gardener had been unable to overtake him; moreover, he had been summoned, without delay, to the house and despatched for the doctor.

I went to my mother's room; she was lying in bed, whiter than the pillow on which her head rested. . . At sight of me she smiled faintly, and put out her hand to me. I sat down by her side, and began to question her; at first she persistently parried my questions; but at last she confessed that she had seen something which had frightened her greatly.

"Did some one enter here?" I asked.

"No," she answered hastily, "no one entered, but it seemed to me . . . . I thought I saw . . . . a vision. . . ."

She ceased speaking and covered her eyes with her hand. I was on the point of communicating

to her what I had heard from the gardener—and my meeting with the baron also, by the way . . . . but, for some reason or other, the words died on my lips.

Nevertheless I did bring myself to remark to my mother that visions do not manifest themselves in the daylight. . . .

"Stop," she whispered, "please stop; do not torture me now. Some day thou shalt know. . . ." Again she relapsed into silence. Her hands were cold, and her pulse beat fast and unevenly. I gave her a dose of her medicine and stepped a little to one side, in order not to disturb her.

She did not rise all day. She lay motionless and quiet, only sighing deeply from time to time, and opening her eyes in a timorous fashion.—Every one in the house was perplexed.

## VIII

Toward night a slight fever made its appearance, and my mother sent me away. I did not go to my own chamber, however, but lay down in the adjoining room on the divan. Every quarter of an hour I rose, approached the door on tiptoe, and listened. . . . Everything remained silent—but my mother hardly slept at all that night. When I went into her room early in the morning her face appeared to me to be swollen, and her eyes were shining with an unnatural bril-

liancy. In the course of the day she became a little easier, but toward evening the fever increased again.

Up to that time she had maintained an obstinate silence, but now she suddenly began to talk in a hurried, spasmodic voice. She was not delirious, there was sense in her words, but there was no coherency in them. Not long before midnight she raised herself up in bed with a convulsive movement (I was sitting beside her), and with the same hurried voice she began to narrate to me, continually drinking water in gulps from a glass, feebly flourishing her hands, and not once looking at me the while. . . . At times she paused, exerted an effort over herself, and went on again. . . . All this was strange, as though she were doing it in her sleep, as though she herself were not present, but as though some other person were speaking with her lips, or making her speak.

## IX

"LISTEN to what I have to tell thee," she began. "Thou art no longer a young boy; thou must know all. I had a good friend. . . . She married a man whom she loved with all her heart, and she was happy with her husband. But during the first year of their married life they both went to the capital to spend a few weeks and

enjoy themselves. They stopped at a good hotel and went out a great deal to theatres and assemblies. My friend was very far from homely; every one noticed her, all the young men paid court to her; but among them was one in particular . . . an officer. He followed her unremittingly, and wherever she went she beheld his black, wicked eyes. He did not make her acquaintance, and did not speak to her even once; he merely kept staring at her in a very strange, insolent way. All the pleasures of the capital were poisoned by his presence. She began to urge her husband to depart as speedily as possible, and they had fully made up their minds to the journey. One day her husband went off to the club; some officers—officers who belonged to the same regiment as this man—had invited him to play cards. . . . For the first time she was left alone. Her husband did not return for a long time; she dismissed her maid and went to bed. . . . And suddenly a great dread came upon her, so that she even turned cold all over and began to tremble. It seemed to her that she heard a faint tapping on the other side of the wall—like the noise a dog makes when scratching—and she began to stare at that wall. In the corner burned a shrine-lamp; the chamber was all hung with silken stuff. . . . Suddenly something began to move at that point, rose, opened. . . . . And straight out of the wall, all black and

long, stepped forth that dreadful man with the wicked eyes!

"She tried to scream and could not. She was benumbed with fright. He advanced briskly toward her, like a rapacious wild beast, flung something over her head, something stifling, heavy and white. . . . What happened afterward I do not remember. . . . I do not remember! It was like death, like murder. . . . When that terrible fog dispersed at last—when I . . . . my friend recovered her senses, there was no one in the room. Again—and for a long time—she was incapable of crying out, but she did shriek at last . . . . then again everything grew confused. . . .

"Then she beheld by her side her husband, who had been detained at the club until two o'clock. . . . . His face was distorted beyond recognition. He began to question her, but she said nothing. . . . Then she fell ill. . . . But I remember that when she was left alone in the room she examined that place in the wall. . . . Under the silken hangings there proved to be a secret door. And her wedding-ring had disappeared from her hand. This ring was of an unusual shape. Upon it seven tiny golden stars alternated with seven tiny silver stars; it was an ancient family heirloom. Her husband asked her what had become of her ring; she could make no reply. Her husband thought that she had dropped it somewhere, hunted everywhere for it, but nowhere

could he find it. Gloom descended upon him, he decided to return home as speedily as possible, and as soon as the doctor permitted they quitted the capital. . . . But imagine! On the very day of their departure they suddenly encountered, on the street, a litter. . . . In that litter lay a man who had just been killed, with a cleft skull—and just imagine! that man was that same dreadful nocturnal visitor with the wicked eyes. . . . He had been killed over a game of cards!

"Then my friend went away to the country, and became a mother for the first time . . . . and lived several years with her husband. He never learned anything about that matter, and what could she say? She herself knew nothing. But her former happiness had vanished. Darkness had invaded their life—and that darkness was never dispelled. . . . They had no other children either before or after . . . . but that son. . . ."

My mother began to tremble all over, and covered her face with her hands.

"But tell me now," she went on, with redoubled force, "whether my friend was in any way to blame? With what could she reproach herself? She was punished, but had not she the right to declare, in the presence of God himself, that the punishment which overtook her was unjust? Then why can the past present itself to her, after the lapse of so many years, in so frightful an aspect, as though she were a sinner tor-

tured by the gnawings of conscience? Macbeth slew Banquo, so it is not to be wondered at that he should have visions . . . . but I . . . ."

But my mother's speech became so entangled and confused that I ceased to understand her. . . . . I no longer had any doubt that she was raving in delirium.

## X

ANY one can easily understand what a shattering effect my mother's narration produced upon me! I had divined, at her very first word, that she was speaking of herself, and not of any acquaintance of hers; her slip of the tongue only confirmed me in my surmise. So it really was my father whom I had sought out in my dream, whom I had beheld when wide awake! He had not been killed, as my mother had supposed, but merely wounded. . . . And he had come to her, and had fled, affrighted by her fright. Everything suddenly became clear to me; the feeling of involuntary repugnance for me which sometimes awoke in my mother, and her constant sadness, and our isolated life. . . . I remember that my head reeled, and I clutched at it with both hands, as though desirous of holding it firmly in its place. But one thought had become riveted in it like a nail. I made up my mind, without fail, at any cost, to find that man again! Why?

With what object?—I did not account to myself for that; but to find him . . . . to find him—that had become for me a question of life or death!

On the following morning my mother regained her composure at last . . . . the fever passed off . . . . she fell asleep. Committing her to the care of our landlord and landlady and the servants, I set out on my quest.

## XI

First of all, as a matter of course, I betook myself to the coffee-house where I had met the baron; but in the coffee-house no one knew him or had even noticed him: he was a chance visitor. The proprietors had noticed the negro—his figure had been too striking to escape notice; but who he was, where he stayed, no one knew either. Leaving my address, in case of an emergency, at the coffee-house, I began to walk about the streets and the water-front of the town, the wharves, the boulevards; I looked into all the public institutions, and nowhere did I find any one who resembled either the baron or his companion. . . . As I had not caught the baron's name, I was deprived of the possibility of appealing to the police; but I privately gave two or three guardians of public order to understand (they gazed at me in surprise, it is true, and did

not entirely believe me) that I would lavishly reward their zeal if they should be successful in coming upon the traces of those two individuals, whose personal appearance I tried to describe as minutely as possible.

Having strolled about in this manner until dinner-time, I returned home thoroughly worn out. My mother had got out of bed; but with her habitual melancholy there was mingled a new element, a sort of pensive perplexity, which cut me to the heart like a knife. I sat with her all the evening. We said hardly anything; she laid out her game of patience, I silently looked at her cards. She did not refer by a single word to her story, or to what had happened the day before. It was as though we had both entered into a compact not to touch upon those strange and terrifying occurrences. . . . She appeared to be vexed with herself and ashamed of what had involuntarily burst from her; but perhaps she did not remember very clearly what she had said in her semi-fevered delirium, and hoped that I would spare her. . . . And, in fact, I did spare her, and she was conscious of it; as on the preceding day she avoided meeting my eyes.

A frightful storm had suddenly sprung up out of doors. The wind howled and tore in wild gusts, the window-panes rattled and quivered; despairing shrieks and groans were borne through the air, as though something on high

had broken loose and were flying with mad weeping over the shaking houses. Just before dawn I lost myself in a doze . . . . when suddenly it seemed to me as though some one had entered my room and called me, had uttered my name, not in a loud, but in a decided voice. I raised my head and saw no one; but, strange to relate! I not only was not frightened—I was delighted; there suddenly arose within me the conviction that now I should, without fail, attain my end. I hastily dressed myself and left the house.

## XII

THE storm had subsided . . . . but its last flutterings could still be felt. It was early; there were no people in the streets; in many places fragments of chimneys, tiles, boards of fences which had been rent asunder, the broken boughs of trees, lay strewn upon the ground. . . . "What happened at sea last night?" I involuntarily thought at the sight of the traces left behind by the storm. I started to go to the port, but my feet bore me in another direction, as though in obedience to an irresistible attraction. Before ten minutes had passed I found myself in a quarter of the town which I had never yet visited. I was walking, not fast, but without stopping, step by step, with a strange sensation at my heart; I was expecting something remark-

able, impossible, and, at the same time, I was convinced that that impossible thing would come to pass.

## XIII

And lo, it came to pass, that remarkable, that unexpected thing! Twenty paces in front of me I suddenly beheld that same negro who had spoken to the baron in my presence at the coffeehouse! Enveloped in the same cloak which I had then noticed on him, he seemed to have popped up out of the earth, and with his back turned toward me was walking with brisk strides along the narrow sidewalk of the crooked alley! I immediately dashed in pursuit of him, but he redoubled his gait, although he did not glance behind him, and suddenly made an abrupt turn around the corner of a projecting house. I rushed to that corner and turned it as quickly as the negro had done. . . . Marvellous to relate! Before me stretched a long, narrow, and perfectly empty street; the morning mist filled it with its dim, leaden light,—but my gaze penetrated to its very extremity. I could count all its buildings . . . . and not a single living being was anywhere astir! The tall negro in the cloak had vanished as suddenly as he had appeared! I was amazed . . . . but only for a moment. Another feeling immediately took possession of me;

that street which stretched out before my eyes, all dumb and dead, as it were,—I recognised it! It was the street of my dream. I trembled and shivered—the morning was so chilly—and instantly, without the slightest wavering, with a certain terror of confidence, I went onward.

I began to seek with my eyes. . . . Yes, there it is, yonder, on the right, with a corner projecting on the sidewalk—yonder is the house of my dream, yonder is the ancient gate with the stone scrolls on each side. . . . The house is not circular, it is true, but square . . . . but that is a matter of no importance. . . . I knock at the gate, I knock once, twice, thrice, ever more and more loudly. . . . The gate opens slowly, with a heavy screech, as though yawning. In front of me stands a young serving-maid with a dishevelled head and sleepy eyes. She has evidently just waked up.

"Does the baron live here?" I inquire, as I run a swift glance over the deep, narrow courtyard. . . . It is there; it is all there . . . . there are the planks which I had seen in my dream.

"No," the maid answers me, "the baron does not live here."

"What dost thou mean by that? It is impossible!"

"He is not here now. He went away yesterday."

"Whither?"

"To America."

"To America!" I involuntarily repeated. "But he is coming back?"

The maid looked suspiciously at me.

"I don't know. Perhaps he will not come back at all."

"But has he been living here long?"

"No, not long; about a week. Now he is not here at all."

"But what was the family name of that baron?"

The maid-servant stared at me.

"Don't you know his name? We simply called him the baron. Hey, there! Piótr!" she cried, perceiving that I was pushing my way in. —"come hither: some stranger or other is asking all sorts of questions."

From the house there presented itself the shambling figure of a robust labourer.

"What 's the matter? What 's wanted?" he inquired in a hoarse voice,—and having listened to me with a surly mien, he repeated what the maid-servant had said.

"But who does live here?" I said.

"Our master."

"And who is he?"

"A carpenter. They are all carpenters in this street."

"Can he be seen?"

"Impossible now, he is asleep."

"And cannot I go into the house?"

"No; go your way."

"Well, and can I see your master a little later?"

"Why not? Certainly. He can always be seen. . . . That 's his business as a dealer. Only, go your way now. See how early it is."

"Well, and how about that negro?" I suddenly asked.

The labourer stared in amazement, first at me, then at the maid-servant.

"What negro?" he said at last.—"Go away, sir. You can come back later. Talk with the master."

I went out into the street. The gate was instantly banged behind me, heavily and sharply, without squeaking this time.

I took good note of the street and house and went away, but not home.—I felt something in the nature of disenchantment. Everything which had happened to me was so strange, so remarkable—and yet, how stupidly it had been ended! I had been convinced that I should behold in that house the room which was familiar to me—and in the middle of it my father, the baron, in a dressing-gown and with a pipe. . . . And instead of that, the master of the house was a carpenter, and one might visit him as much as one pleased,—and order furniture of him if one wished!

But my father had gone to America! And what was left for me to do now? . . . Tell my mother everything, or conceal forever the very memory of that meeting? I was absolutely unable to reconcile myself to the thought that such a senseless, such a commonplace ending should be tacked on to such a supernatural, mysterious beginning!

I did not wish to return home, and walked straight ahead, following my nose, out of the town.

## XIV

I WALKED along with drooping head, without a thought, almost without sensation, but wholly engrossed in myself.—A measured, dull and angry roar drew me out of my torpor. I raised my head: it was the sea roaring and booming fifty paces from me. Greatly agitated by the nocturnal storm, the sea was a mass of white-caps to the very horizon, and steep crests of long breakers were rolling in regularly and breaking on the flat shore. I approached it, and walked along the very line left by the ebb and flow on the yellow, ribbed sand, strewn with fragments of trailing seawrack, bits of shells, serpent-like ribbons of eel-grass. Sharp-winged gulls with pitiful cry, borne on the wind from the distant aerial depths, soared white as snow against the grey,

cloudy sky, swooped down abruptly, and as though skipping from wave to wave, departed again and vanished like silvery flecks in the strips of swirling foam. Some of them, I noticed, circled persistently around a large isolated boulder which rose aloft in the midst of the monotonous expanse of sandy shores. Coarse seaweed grew in uneven tufts on one side of the rock; and at the point where its tangled stems emerged from the yellow salt-marsh, there was something black, and long, and arched, and not very large. . . . I began to look more intently. . . . . Some dark object was lying there—lying motionless beside the stone. . . . That object became constantly clearer and more distinct the nearer I approached. . . .

I was only thirty paces from the rock now. . . .

Why, that was the outline of a human body! It was a corpse; it was a drowned man, cast up by the sea! I went clear up to the rock.

It was the corpse of the baron, my father! I stopped short, as though rooted to the spot. Then only did I understand that ever since daybreak I had been guided by some unknown forces —that I was in their power,—and for the space of several minutes there was nothing in my soul save the ceaselesss crashing of the sea, and a dumb terror in the presence of the Fate which held me in its grip. . . .

## XV

He was lying on his back, bent a little to one side, with his left arm thrown above his head . . . . the right was turned under his bent body. The sticky slime had sucked in the tips of his feet, shod in tall sailor's boots; the short blue pea-jacket, all impregnated with sea-salt, had not unbuttoned; a red scarf encircled his neck in a hard knot. The swarthy face, turned skyward, seemed to be laughing; from beneath the up-turned upper lip small close-set teeth were visible; the dim pupils of the half-closed eyes were hardly to be distinguished from the darkened whites; covered with bubbles of foam the dirt-encrusted hair spread out over the ground and laid bare the smooth forehead with the purplish line of the scar; the narrow nose rose up like a sharp, white streak between the sunken cheeks. The storm of the past night had done its work. . . . . He had not beheld America! The man who had insulted my mother, who had marred her life, my father—yes! my father, I could cherish no doubt as to that—lay stretched out helpless in the mud at my feet. I experienced a sense of satisfied vengeance, and compassion, and repulsion, and terror most of all . . . . of twofold terror; terror of what I had seen, and of what had come to pass. That evil, that crim-

inal element of which I have already spoken, those incomprehensible spasms rose up within me . . . . stifled me.

"Aha!" I thought to myself: "so that is why I am what I am. . . . That is where blood tells!" I stood beside the corpse and gazed and waited, to see whether those dead pupils would not stir, whether those benumbed lips would not quiver. No! everything was motionless; the very sea-weed, among which the surf had cast him, seemed to have congealed; even the gulls had flown away—there was not a fragment anywhere, not a plank or any broken rigging. There was emptiness everywhere . . . . only he—and I—and the foaming sea in the distance. I cast a glance behind me; the same emptiness was there; a chain of hillocks on the horizon . . . . that was all!

I dreaded to leave that unfortunate man in that loneliness, in the ooze of the shore, to be devoured by fishes and birds; an inward voice told me that I ought to hunt up some men and call them thither, if not to aid—that was out of the question—at least for the purpose of laying him out, of bearing him beneath an inhabited roof. . . . But indescribable terror suddenly took possession of me. It seemed to me as though that dead man knew that I had come thither, that he himself had arranged that last meeting—it even seemed as though I could hear that dull, familiar muttering. . . . I ran off to

one side . . . looked behind me once more. . . . Something shining caught my eye; it brought me to a standstill. It was a golden hoop on the outstretched hand of the corpse. . . . I recognised my mother's wedding-ring. I remember how I forced myself to return, to go close, to bend down. . . I remember the sticky touch of the cold fingers, I remember how I panted and puckered up my eyes and gnashed my teeth, as I tugged persistently at the ring. . . .

At last I got it off—and I fled—fled away, in headlong flight,—and something darted after me, and overtook me and caught me.

## XVI

Everything which I had gone through and endured was, probably, written on my face when I returned home. My mother suddenly rose upright as soon as I entered her room, and gazed at me with such insistent inquiry that, after having unsuccessfully attempted to explain myself, I ended by silently handing her the ring. She turned frightfully pale, her eyes opened unusually wide and turned dim like *his*.—She uttered a faint cry, seized the ring, reeled, fell upon my breast, and fairly swooned there, with her head thrown back and devouring me with those wide, mad eyes. I encircled her waist with both arms, and standing still on one spot, never stirring, I

slowly narrated everything, without the slightest reservation, to her, in a quiet voice: my dream and the meeting, and everything, everything. . . . She heard me out to the end, only her breast heaved more and more strongly, and her eyes suddenly grew more animated and drooped. Then she put the ring on her fourth finger, and, retreating a little, began to get out a mantilla and a hat. I asked where she was going. She raised a surprised glance to me and tried to answer, but her voice failed her. She shuddered several times, rubbed her hands as though endeavouring to warm herself, and at last she said: "Let us go at once thither."

"Whither, mother dear?"

"Where he is lying. . . . I want to see. . . I want to know. . . . I shall identify. . . ."

I tried to persuade her not to go; but she was almost in hysterics. I understood that it was impossible to oppose her desire, and we set out.

## XVII

And lo, again I am walking over the sand of the dunes, but I am no longer alone, I am walking arm in arm with my mother. The sea has retreated, has gone still further away; it is quieting down; but even its diminished roar is menacing and ominous. Here, at last, the solitary rock has shown itself ahead of us—and there is

the seaweed. I look intently, I strive to distinguish that rounded object lying on the ground—but I see nothing. We approach closer. I involuntarily retard my steps. But where is that black, motionless thing? Only the stalks of the seaweed stand out darkly against the sand, which is already dry. . . . We go to the very rock. . . . The corpse is nowhere to be seen, and only on the spot where it had lain there still remains a depression, and one can make out where the arms and legs lay. . . . Round about the seaweed seems tousled, and the traces of one man's footsteps are discernible; they go across the down, then disappear on reaching the flinty ridge.

My mother and I exchange glances and are ourselves frightened at what we read on our own faces. . . .

Can he have got up of himself and gone away?

"But surely thou didst behold him dead?" she asks in a whisper.

I can only nod my head. Three hours have not elapsed since I stumbled upon the baron's body. . . . Some one had discovered it and carried it away.—I must find out who had done it, and what had become of him.

But first of all I must attend to my mother.

## XVIII

WHILE she was on her way to the fatal spot she was in a fever, but she controlled herself. The disappearance of the corpse had startled her as the crowning misfortune. She was stupefied. I feared for her reason. With great difficulty I got her home. I put her to bed again; again I called the doctor for her; but as soon as my mother partly recovered her senses she at once demanded that I should instantly set out in search of "that man." I obeyed. But, despite all possible measures, I discovered nothing. I went several times to the police-office, I visited all the villages in the neighbourhood, I inserted several advertisements in the newspapers, I made inquiries in every direction—all in vain! It is true that I did hear that a drowned man had been found at one of the hamlets on the seashore. . . . I immediately hastened thither, but he was already buried, and from all the tokens he did not resemble the baron. I found out on what ship he had sailed for America. At first every one was positive that that ship had perished during the tempest; but several months afterward rumours began to circulate to the effect that it had been seen at anchor in the harbour of New York. Not knowing what to do, I set about hunting up the negro whom I had seen.—I offered him,

through the newspapers, a very considerable sum of money if he would present himself at our house. A tall negro in a cloak actually did come to the house in my absence. . . . But after questioning the servant-maid, he suddenly went away and returned no more.

And thus the trace of my . . . . my father grew cold; thus did it vanish irrevocably in the mute gloom. My mother and I never spoke of him. Only, one day, I remember that she expressed surprise at my never having alluded before to my strange dream; and then she added: "Of course, it really . . . ." and did not finish her sentence.

My mother was ill for a long time, and after her convalescence our former relations were not reëstablished. She felt awkward in my presence until the day of her death. . . . Precisely that, awkward. And there was no way of helping her in her grief. Everything becomes smoothed down, the memories of the most tragic family events gradually lose their force and venom; but if a feeling of awkwardness has been set up between two closely-connected persons, it is impossible to extirpate it!

I have never again had that dream which had been wont so to disturb me; I no longer "search for" my father; but it has sometimes seemed to me—and it seems so to me to this day—that in my sleep I hear distant shrieks, unintermittent, mel-

ancholy plaints; they resound somewhere behind a lofty wall, across which it is impossible to clamber; they rend my heart—and I am utterly unable to comprehend what it is: whether it is a living man groaning, or whether I hear the wild, prolonged roar of the troubled sea. And now it passes once more into that beast-like growl—and I awake with sadness and terror in my soul.

# FATHER ALEXYÉI'S STORY

(1877)

# FATHER ALEXYÉI'S STORY

TWENTY years ago I was obliged—in my capacity of private inspector—to make the circuit of all my aunt's rather numerous estates. The parish priests, with whom I regarded it as my duty to make acquaintance, proved to be individuals of pretty much one pattern, and made after one model, as it were. At length, in about the last of the estates which I was inspecting, I hit upon a priest who did not resemble his brethren. He was a very aged man, almost decrepit; and had it not been for the urgent entreaties of his parishioners, who loved and respected him, he would long before have petitioned to be retired that he might rest. Two peculiarities impressed me in Father Alexyéi (that was the priest's name). In the first place, he not only asked nothing for himself but announced plainly that he required nothing; and, in the second place, I have never beheld in any human face a more sorrowful, thoroughly indifferent—what is called an "overwhelmed"—expression. The features of that face were of the ordinary rustic type: a wrinkled forehead, small grey eyes, a large nose, a wedge-shaped beard, a swarthy,

sunburned skin. . . . But the expression! . . . the expression! . . . In that dim gaze life barely burned, and sadly at that; and his voice also was, somehow, lifeless and dim.

I fell ill and kept my bed for several days. Father Alexyéi dropped in to see me in the evenings, not to chat, but to play "fool."[1] The game of cards seemed to divert him more than it did me. One day, after having been left "the fool" several times in succession (which delighted Father Alexyéi not a little), I turned the conversation on his past life, on the afflictions which had left on him such manifest traces. Father Alexyéi remained obdurate for a long time at first, but ended by relating to me his story. He must have taken a liking to me for some reason or other. Otherwise he would not have been so frank with me.

I shall endeavour to transmit his story in his own words. Father Alexyéi talked very simply and intelligently, without any seminary or provincial tricks and turns of speech. It was not the first time I had noticed that Russians, of all classes and callings, who have been violently shattered and humbled express themselves precisely in such language.

. . . . I HAD a good and sedate wife [thus he began], I loved her heartily, and we begat eight

[1] A simple card-game.—TRANSLATOR.

children. One of my sons became a bishop, and died not so very long ago, in his diocese. I shall now tell you about my other son,—Yákoff was his name. I sent him to the seminary in the town of T * * *, and soon began to receive the most comforting reports about him. He was the best pupil in all the branches! Even at home, in his boyhood, he had been distinguished for his diligence and discretion; a whole day would sometimes pass without one's hearing him . . . he would be sitting all the time over his book, reading. He never caused me and my wife[1] the slightest displeasure; he was a meek lad. Only sometimes he was thoughtful beyond his years, and his health was rather weak. Once something remarkable happened to him. He left the house at daybreak, on St. Peter's day,[2] and was gone almost all the morning. At last he returned. My wife and I ask him: "Where hast thou been?"

"I have been for a ramble in the forest," says he, "and there I met a certain little green old man, who talked a great deal with me, and gave me such savoury nuts!"

"What little green old man art thou talking about?" we ask him.

"I don't know," says he; "I never saw him

[1] The word used is *popadyá*, the feminine form of *pop(e)*, or priest. *Svyashtchénnik* is, however, more commonly used for priest. —TRANSLATOR.

[2] June 29 (O. S.), July 12 (N. S.).—TRANSLATOR.

before. He was a little old man with a hump, and he kept shifting from one to the other of his little feet, and laughing—and he was all green, just like a leaf."

"What," say we, "and was his face green also?"

"Yes, his face, and his hair, and even his eyes."

Our son had never lied to us; but this time my wife and I had our doubts.

"Thou must have fallen asleep in the forest, in the heat of the day, and have seen that old man in thy dreams."

"I was n't asleep at all," says he. "Why, don't you believe me?" says he. "See here, I have one of the nuts left in my pocket."

Yákoff pulled the nut out of his pocket and showed it to us.—The kernel was small, in the nature of a chestnut, and rather rough; it did not resemble our ordinary nuts. I laid it aside, and intended to show it to the doctor . . . but it got lost. . . . I did not find it again.

Well, sir, so we sent him to the seminary, and, as I have already informed you, he rejoiced us by his success. So my spouse and I assumed that he would turn out a fine man! When he came for a sojourn at home it was a pleasure to look at him; he was so comely, and there was no mischief about him;—every one liked him, every one congratulated us. Only he was still rather thin of body, and there was no real good rosi-

ness in his face. So then, he was already in his nineteenth year, and his education would soon be finished. When suddenly we receive from him a letter.—He writes to us: "Dear father and mother, be not wroth with me, permit me to be a layman;[1] my heart does not incline to the ecclesiastical profession, I dread the responsibility, I am afraid I shall sin—doubts have taken hold upon me! Without your parental permission and blessing I shall venture on nothing—but one thing I will tell you; I am afraid of myself, for I have begun to think a great deal."

I assure you, my dear sir, that this letter made me very sad,—as though a boar-spear had pricked my heart,—for I saw that I should have no one to take my place![2] My eldest son was a monk; and this one wanted to abandon his vocation altogether. I was also pained because priests from our family have lived in our parish for close upon two hundred years. But I thought to myself: "There 's no use in kicking against the pricks; evidently, so it was predestined for him. What sort of a pastor would he be if he has admitted doubt to his mind?" I took counsel with my wife, and wrote to him in the following sense:

[1] In former days the sons of priests generally became priests. It is still so, in a measure.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Therefore, there would be no one to maintain his widow and daughters, unless some young man could be found to marry one of the daughters, be ordained, take the parish, and assume the support of the family.—TRANSLATOR.

"Think it over well, my son Yákoff; measure ten times before you cut off once—there are great difficulties in the worldly service, cold and hunger, and scorn for our caste! And thou must know beforehand that no one will lend a hand to aid; so see to it that thou dost not repine afterward. My desire, as thou knowest, has always been that thou shouldst succeed me; but if thou really hast come to cherish doubts as to thy calling and hast become unsteady in the faith, then it is not my place to restrain thee. The Lord's will be done! Thy mother and I will not refuse thee our blessing."

Yákoff answered me with a grateful letter. "Thou hast rejoiced me, dear father," said he. "It is my intention to devote myself to the profession of learning, and I have some protection; I shall enter the university and become a doctor, for I feel a strong bent for science." I read Yáshka's letter and became sadder than before; but I did not share my grief with any one. My old woman caught a severe cold about that time and died—from that same cold, or the Lord took her to Himself because He loved her, I know not which. I used to weep and weep because I was a lonely widower—but what help was there for that?[1] So it had to be, you know. And I would have been glad to go into the earth

[1] Parish priests (the White Clergy) must marry before they are ordained sub-deacon, and are not allowed to remarry in the Holy Catholic Church of the East.—TRANSLATOR.

. . . . but it is hard . . . it will not open. And I was expecting my son; for he had notified me: "Before I go to Moscow," he said, "I shall look in at home." And he did come to the parental roof, but did not remain there long. It seemed as though something were urging him on; he would have liked, apparently, to fly on wings to Moscow, to his beloved university! I began to question him as to his doubts. "What was the cause of them?" I asked. But I did not get much out of him. One idea had pushed itself into his head, and that was the end of it! "I want to help my neighbours," he said.—Well, sir, he left me. I don't believe he took a penny with him, only a few clothes. He had such reliance on himself! And not without reason. He passed an excellent examination, matriculated as student, obtained lessons in private houses. . . . He was very strong on the ancient languages! And what think you? He took it into his head to send me money. I cheered up a little,—not on account of the money, of course,—I sent that back to him, and even scolded him; but I cheered up because I saw that the young fellow would make his way in the world. But my rejoicing did not last long. . . .

He came to me for his first vacation. . . . And, what marvel is this? I do not recognise my Yákoff! He had grown so tiresome and surly,—you could n't get a word out of him. And

his face had changed also: he had grown about ten years older. He had been taciturn before, there 's no denying that! At the slightest thing he would grow shy and blush like a girl. . . . But when he raised his eyes, you could see that all was bright in his soul! But now it was quite different. He was not shy, but he held aloof, like a wolf, and was always looking askance. He had neither a smile nor a greeting for any one—he was just like a stone! If I undertook to interrogate him, he would either remain silent or snarl. I began to wonder whether he had taken to drink—which God forbid!—or had conceived a passion for cards; or whether something in the line of a weakness for women had happened to him. In youth love-longings act powerfully,—well, and in such a large city as Moscow bad examples and occasions are not lacking. But no; nothing of that sort was discernible. His drink was kvas[1] and water; he never looked at the female sex—and had no intercourse with people in general. And what was most bitter of all to me, he did not have his former confidence in me; a sort of indifference had made its appearance, just as though everything belonging to him had become loathsome to him. I turned the conversation on the sciences, on the

[1] A sourish, non-intoxicating beverage, prepared by putting water on rye meal or the crusts of sour black rye bread and allowing it to ferment.—TRANSLATOR.

university, but even there could get no real answer. He went to church, but he was not devoid of peculiarities there also; everywhere he was grim and scowling, but in church he seemed always to be grinning.

After this fashion he spent six weeks with me, then went back to Moscow. From Moscow he wrote to me twice, and it seemed to me, from his letters, as though he were regaining his sensibilities. But picture to yourself my surprise, my dear sir! Suddenly, in the very middle of the winter, just before the Christmas holidays, he presents himself before me!

"How didst thou get here? How is this? What 's the matter? I know that thou hast no vacation at this time.—Dost thou come from Moscow?"—I ask.

"Yes."

"And how about . . . . the university?"

"I have left the university."

"Thou hast left it?"

"Just so."

"For good?"

"For good."

"But art thou ill, pray, Yákoff?"

"No, father," says he, "I am not ill; but just don't bother me and question me, dear father, or I will go away from here—and that 's the last thou wilt ever see of me."

Yákoff tells me that he is not ill, but his face is such that I am fairly frightened. It was dreadful, dark—not human, actually!—His cheeks were drawn, his cheek-bones projected, he was mere skin and bone; his voice sounded as though it proceeded from a barrel . . . . while his eyes . . . O Lord and Master! what eyes!—menacing, wild, incessantly darting from side to side, and it was impossible to catch them; his brows were knit, his lips seemed to be twisted on one side. . . . What had happened to my Joseph Most Fair,[1] to my quiet lad? I cannot comprehend it. "Can he have gone crazy?" I say to myself. He roams about like a spectre by night, he does not sleep,—and then, all of a sudden, he will take to staring into a corner as though he were completely benumbed. . . . It was enough to scare one!

Although he had threatened to leave the house if I did not leave him in peace, yet surely I was his father! My last hope was ruined—yet I was to hold my tongue! So one day, availing myself of an opportunity, I began to entreat Yá-

[1] One of the ancient religious ballads sung by the "wandering cripples." Joseph (son of Jacob) is called by this appellation, and also a "tzarévitch," or king's son. For a brief account of these ballads see: "The Epic Songs of Russia" (Introduction), and Chapter I in "A Survey of Russian Literature" (I. F. Hapgood). This particular ballad is mentioned on page 22 of the last-named book.—TRANSLATOR.

(N. B. This note is placed here because there is no other book in English where any information whatever can be had concerning these ballads or this ballad.—I. F. H.)

koff with tears, I began to adjure him by the memory of his dead mother:

"Tell me," I said, "as thy father in the flesh and in the spirit, Yásha, what aileth thee? Do not kill me; explain thyself, lighten thy heart! Can it be that thou hast ruined some Christian soul? If so, repent!"

"Well, dear father," he suddenly says to me (this took place toward nightfall), "thou hast moved me to compassion. I will tell thee the whole truth. I have not ruined any Christian soul—but my own soul is going to perdition."

"How is that?"

"In this way. . . ." And thereupon Yákoff raised his eyes to mine for the first time.—"It is going on four months now," he began. . . . But suddenly he broke off and began to breathe heavily.

"What about the fourth month? Tell me, do not make me suffer!"

"This is the fourth month that I have been seeing him."

"Him? Who is he?"

"Why, the person . . . . whom it is awkward to mention at night."

I fairly turned cold all over and fell to quaking.

"What?!" I said, "dost thou see *him?*"

"Yes."

"And dost thou see him now?"

"Yes."

"Where?" And I did not dare to turn round, and we both spoke in a whisper.

"Why, yonder. . . ." and he indicated the spot with his eyes . . . . "yonder, in the corner."

I summoned up my courage and looked at the corner; there was nothing there.

"Why, good gracious, there is nothing there, Yákoff!"

"*Thou* dost not see him, but I do."

Again I glanced round . . . . again nothing. Suddenly there recurred to my mind the little old man in the forest who had given him the chestnut. "What does he look like?" I said. . . . . "Is he green?"

"No, he is not green, but black."

"Has he horns?"

"No, he is like a man,—only all black."

As Yákoff speaks he displays his teeth in a grin and turns as pale as a corpse, and huddles up to me in terror; and his eyes seem on the point of popping out of his head, and he keeps staring at the corner.

"Why, it is a shadow glimmering faintly," I say. "That is the blackness from a shadow, but thou mistakest it for a man."

"Nothing of the sort!—And I see his eyes: now he is rolling up the whites, now he is raising his hand, he is calling me."

"Yákoff, Yákoff, thou shouldst try to pray;

this obsession would disperse. Let God arise and His enemies shall be scattered!"

"I have tried," says he, "but it has no effect."

"Wait, wait, Yákoff, do not lose thy courage. I will fumigate with incense; I will recite a prayer; I will sprinkle holy water around thee."

Yákoff merely waved his hand. "I believe neither in thy incense nor in holy water; they don't help worth a farthing. I cannot get rid of him now. Ever since he came to me last summer, on one accursed day, he has been my constant visitor, and he cannot be driven away. Understand this, father, and do not wonder any longer at my behaviour—and do not torment me."

"On what day did he come to thee?" I ask him, and all the while I am making the sign of the cross over him. "Was it not when thou didst write about thy doubts?"

Yákoff put away my hand.

"Let me alone, dear father," says he, "don't excite me to wrath lest worse should come of it. I 'm not far from laying hands on myself, as it is."

You can imagine, my dear sir, how I felt when I heard that. . . . I remember that I wept all night. "How have I deserved such wrath from the Lord?" I thought to myself.

At this point Father Alexyéi drew from his pocket a checked handkerchief and began to

blow his nose, and stealthily wiped his eyes, by the way.

A bad time began for us then [he went on]. I could think of but one thing: how to prevent him from running away, or—which the Lord forbid!—of actually doing himself some harm! I watched his every step, and was afraid to enter into conversation.—And there dwelt near us at that time a neighbour, the widow of a colonel, Márfa Sávishna was her name; I cherished a great respect for her, because she was a quiet, sensible woman, in spite of the fact that she was young and comely. I was in the habit of going to her house frequently, and she did not despise my vocation.[1] Not knowing, in my grief and anguish, what to do, I just told her all about it.—At first she was greatly alarmed, and even thoroughly frightened; but later on she became thoughtful. For a long time she deigned to sit thus, in silence; and then she expressed a wish to see my son and converse with him. And I felt that I ought without fail to comply with her wish; for it was not feminine curiosity which prompted it in this case, but something else.

On returning home I began to persuade Yákoff. "Come with me to see the colonel's widow," I said to him.

He began to flourish his legs and arms!

[1] Ecclesiastics are regarded as plebeians by the gentry or nobles in Russia.—TRANSLATOR.

"I won't go to her," says he, "not on any account! What shall I talk to her about?" He even began to shout at me. But at last I conquered him, and hitching up my little sledge, I drove him to Márfa Sávishna's, and, according to our compact, I left him alone with her. I was surprised at his having consented so speedily. Well, never mind,—we shall see. Three or four hours later my Yákoff returns.

"Well," I ask, "how did our little neighbour please thee?"

He made me no answer. I asked him again.

"She is a virtuous woman," I said.—"I suppose she was amiable with thee?"

"Yes," he says, "she is not like the others."

I saw that he seemed to have softened a little. And I made up my mind to question him then and there. . . .

"And how about the obsession?" I said.

Yákoff looked at me as though I had lashed him with a whip, and again made no reply. I did not worry him further, and left the room; and an hour later I went to the door and peeped through the keyhole. . . . And what do you think?—My Yásha was asleep! He was lying on the couch and sleeping. I crossed myself several times in succession. "May the Lord send Márfa Sávishna every blessing!" I said. "Evidently, she has managed to touch his embittered heart, the dear little dove!"

The next day I see Yákoff take his cap. . . . I think to myself: "Shall I ask him whither he is going?—But no, better not ask . . . . it certainly must be to her!" . . . . And, in point of fact, Yákoff did set off for Márfa Sávishna's house—and sat with her still longer than before; and on the day following he did it again! Then again, the next day but one! My spirits began to revive, for I saw that a change was coming over my son, and his face had grown quite different, and it was becoming possible to look into his eyes: he did not turn away. He was just as depressed as ever, but his former despair and terror had disappeared. But before I had recovered my cheerfulness to any great extent everything again broke off short! Yákoff again became wild, and again it was impossible to approach him. He sat locked up in his little room, and went no more to the widow's.

"Can it be possible," I thought, "that he has hurt her feelings in some way, and she has forbidden him the house?—But no," I thought . . . "although he is unhappy he would not dare to do such a thing; and besides, she is not that sort of woman."

At last I could endure it no longer, and I interrogated him: "Well, Yákoff, how about our neighbour? . . . Apparently thou hast forgotten her altogether."

But he fairly roared at me:—"Our neighbour? Dost thou want *him* to jeer at me?"

"What?" I say.—Then he even clenched his fists and . . . got perfectly furious.

"Yes!" he says; and formerly he had only towered up after a fashion, but now he began to laugh and show his teeth.—"Away! Begone!"

To whom these words were addressed I know not! My legs would hardly bear me forth, to such a degree was I frightened. Just imagine: his face was the colour of red copper, he was foaming at the mouth, his voice was hoarse, exactly as though some one were choking him! . . . . And that very same day I went—I, the orphan of orphans—to Márfa Sávishna . . . . and found her in great affliction. Even her outward appearance had undergone a change: she had grown thin in the face. But she would not talk with me about my son. Only one thing she did say: that no human aid could effect anything in that case. "Pray, father," she said,—and then she presented me with one hundred rubles, —"for the poor and sick of your parish," she said. And again she repeated: "Pray!"—O Lord! As if I had not prayed without that —prayed day and night!

Here Father Alexyéi again pulled out his handkerchief, and again wiped away his tears, but not by stealth this time, and after resting

for a little while, he resumed his cheerless narrative.

Yákoff and I then began to descend as a snowball rolls down hill, and both of us could see that an abyss lay at the foot of the hill; but how were we to hold back, and what measures could we take? And it was utterly impossible to conceal this; my entire parish was greatly disturbed, and said: "The priest's son has gone mad; he is possessed of devils,—and the authorities ought to be informed of all this."—And people infallibly would have informed the authorities had not my parishioners taken pity on me . . . . for which I thank them. In the meantime winter was drawing to an end, and spring was approaching.—And such a spring as God sent!—fair and bright, such as even the old people could not remember: the sun shone all day long, there was no wind, and the weather was warm! And then a happy thought occurred to me: to persuade Yákoff to go off with me to do reverence to Mitrofány, in Vorónezh. "If that last remedy is of no avail," I thought, "well, then, there is but one hope left—the grave!"

So I was sitting one day on the porch just before evening, and the sunset glow was flaming in the sky, and the larks were warbling, and the apple-trees were in bloom, and the grass was growing green. . . . I was sitting and meditating how I could communicate my intention to

Yákoff. Suddenly, lo and behold! he came out on the porch; he stood, gazed around, sighed, and sat down on the step by my side. I was even frightened out of joy, but I did nothing except hold my tongue. But he sits and looks at the sunset glow, and not a word does he utter either. But it seemed to me as though he had become softened, the furrows on his brow had been smoothed away, his eyes had even grown bright. . . . . A little more, it seemed, and a tear would have burst forth! On beholding such a change in him I—excuse me!—grew bold.

"Yákoff," I said to him, "do thou hearken to me without anger. . . ." And then I informed him of my intention; how we were both to go to Saint Mitrofány on foot; and it is about one hundred and fifty versts to Vorónezh from our parts; and how pleasant it would be for us two, in the spring chill, having risen before dawn, to walk and walk over the green grass, along the highway; and how, if we made proper obeisance and prayed before the shrine of the holy man, perhaps—who knows?—the Lord God would show mercy upon us, and he would receive healing, of which there had already been many instances. And just imagine my happiness, my dear sir!

"Very well," says Yákoff, only he does not turn round, but keeps on gazing at the sky.—"I consent. Let us go."

I was fairly stupefied. . . .

"My friend," I say, "my dear little dove, my benefactor!" . . . But he asks me:

"When shall we set out?"

"Why, to-morrow, if thou wilt," I say.

So on the following day we started. We slung wallets over our shoulders, took staves in our hands, and set forth. For seven whole days we trudged on, and all the while the weather favoured us, and was even downright wonderful! There was neither sultry heat nor rain; the flies did not bite, the dust did not make us itch. And every day my Yákoff acquired a better aspect. I must tell you that Yákoff had not been in the habit of seeing *that one* in the open air, but had felt him behind him, close to his back, or his shadow had seemed to be gliding alongside, which troubled my son greatly. But on this occasion nothing of that sort happened, and nothing made its appearance. We talked very little together . . . . but how greatly at our ease we felt—especially I! I saw that my poor boy was coming to life again. I cannot describe to you, my dear sir, what my feelings were then.—Well, we reached Vorónezh at last. We cleaned up ourselves and washed ourselves, and went to the cathedral, to the holy man. For three whole days we hardly left the temple. How many prayer-services we celebrated, how many candles we placed before the holy pictures! And

everything was going well, everything was fine; the days were devout, the nights were tranquil; my Yákoff slept like an infant. He began to talk to me of his own accord. He would ask: "Dost thou see nothing, father dear?" and smile. "No, I see nothing," I would answer.—What more could be demanded? My gratitude to the saint was unbounded.

Three days passed; I said to Yákoff: "Well, now, dear son, the matter has been set in order; there 's a festival in our street. One thing remains to be done; do thou make thy confession and receive the communion; and then, with God's blessing, we will go our way, and after having got duly rested, and worked a bit on the farm to increase thy strength, thou mayest bestir thyself and find a place—and Márfa Sávishna will certainly help us in that," I said.

"No," said Yákoff, "why should we trouble her? But I will take her a ring from Mitrofány's hand."

Thereupon I was greatly encouraged. "See to it," I said, "that thou takest a silver ring, not a gold one,—not a wedding-ring!"

My Yákoff flushed up and merely repeated that it was not proper to trouble her, but immediately assented to all the rest.—We went to the cathedral on the following day; my Yákoff made his confession, and prayed so fervently before it! And then he went forward to take the commu-

nion. I was standing a little to one side, and did not feel the earth under me for joy. . . . It is no sweeter for the angels in heaven! But as I look—what is the meaning of that?—My Yákoff has received the communion, but does not go to sip the warm water and wine![1] He is standing with his back to me. . . . I go to him.

"Yákoff," I say, "why art thou standing here?"

He suddenly wheels round. Will you believe it, I sprang back, so frightened was I!—His face had been dreadful before, but now it had become ferocious, frightful! He was as pale as death, his hair stood on end, his eyes squinted. . . . . I even lost my voice with terror. I tried to speak and could not; I was perfectly benumbed. . . . And he fairly rushed out of the church! I ran after him . . . . but he fled straight to the tavern where we had put up, flung his wallet over his shoulder, and away he flew!

"Whither?" I shouted to him. "Yákoff, what aileth thee? Stop, wait!"

But Yákoff never uttered a word in reply to me, but ran like a hare, and it was utterly impossible to overtake him! He disappeared from

[1] In the Catholic Church of the East the communion is received fasting. A little to one side of the priest stands a cleric holding a platter of blessed bread, cut in small bits, and a porringer of warm water and wine, which (besides their symbolical significance) are taken by each communicant after the Holy Elements, in order that there may be something interposed between the sacrament and ordinary food.—TRANSLATOR.

sight. I immediately turned back, hired a cart, and trembled all over, and all I could say was: "O Lord!" and, "O Lord!" And I understood nothing: some calamity had descended upon us! I set out for home, for I thought, "He has certainly fled thither."—And so he had. Six versts out of the town I espied him; he was striding along the highway. I overtook him, jumped out of the cart, and rushed to him.

"Yásha! Yásha!"—He halted, turned his face toward me, but kept his eyes fixed on the ground and compressed his lips. And say what I would to him, he stood there just like a statue, and one could just see that he was breathing. And at last he trudged on again along the highway.—What was there to do? I followed him. . . .

Akh, what a journey that was, my dear sir! Great as had been our joy on the way to Voronezh, just so great was the horror of the return! I would try to speak to him, and he would begin to gnash his teeth at me over his shoulder, precisely like a tiger or a hyena! Why I did not go mad I do not understand to this day! And at last, one night, in a peasant's chicken-house, he was sitting on the platform over the oven and dangling his feet and gazing about on all sides, when I fell on my knees before him and began to weep, and besought him with bitter entreaty:

"Do not slay thy old father outright," I said; "do not let him fall into despair—tell me what has happened to thee?"

He glanced at me as though he did not see who was before him, and suddenly began to speak, but in such a voice that it rings in my ears even now.

"Listen, daddy," said he. "Dost thou wish to know the whole truth? When I had taken the communion, thou wilt remember, and still held the particle [1] in my mouth, suddenly *he* (and that was in the church, in the broad daylight!) stood in front of me, just as though he had sprung out of the ground, and whispered to me .... (but he had never spoken to me before)—whispered: 'Spit it out, and grind it to powder!' I did so; I spat it out, and ground it under foot. And now it must be that I am lost forever, for every sin shall be forgiven, save the sin against the Holy Spirit. . . ."

And having uttered these dreadful words, my son threw himself back on the platform and I dropped down on the floor of the hut. . . . My legs failed me. . . .

Father Alexyéi paused for a moment, and covered his eyes with his hand.

But why should I weary you longer [he went on], and myself? My son and I dragged ourselves home, and there he soon afterward ex-

[1] That is, the particle of bread dipped in the wine, which is placed in the mouth by the priest with the sacramental spoon.—TRANSLATOR.

pired, and I lost my Yásha. For several days before his death he neither ate nor drank, but kept running back and forth in the room and repeating that there could be no forgiveness for his sin. . . . But he never saw *him* again. "He has ruined my soul," he said; "and why should he come any more now?" And when Yákoff took to his bed, he immediately sank into unconsciousness, and thus, without repentance, like a senseless worm, he went from this life to life eternal. . . .

But I will not believe that the Lord judged harshly. . . .

And among other reasons why I do not believe it is, that he looked so well in his coffin; he seemed to have grown young again and resembled the Yákoff of days gone by. His face was so tranquil and pure, his hair curled in little rings, and there was a smile on his lips. Márfa Sávishna came to look at him, and said the same thing. She encircled him all round with flowers, and laid flowers on his heart, and set up the gravestone at her own expense.

And I was left alone. . . . And that is why, my dear sir, you have beheld such great grief on my face. . . . It will never pass off—and it cannot.

I WANTED to speak a word of comfort to Father Alexyéi . . . . but could think of none.

We parted soon after.

# OLD PORTRAITS

(1881)

# OLD PORTRAITS[1]

ABOUT forty versts from our village there dwelt, many years ago, the great-uncle of my mother, a retired Sergeant of the Guards and a fairly wealthy landed proprietor, Alexyéi Sergyéitch Telyégin, on his ancestral estate, Sukhodól. He never went anywhere himself, and therefore did not visit us; but I was sent to pay my respects to him a couple of times a year, at first with my governor, and later on alone. Alexyéi Sergyéitch always received me very cordially, and I spent three or four days with him. He was already an old man when I made his acquaintance; I remember that I was twelve years old at my first visit, and he was already over seventy. He had been born under the Empress Elizabeth, in the last year of her reign. He lived alone with his wife, Malánya Pávlovna; she was ten years younger than he. They had had two daughters who had been married long before, and rarely visited Sukhodól;

[1] Turgénieff labelled this story and "A Reckless Character," "Fragments from My Own Memoirs and Those of Other People." In a foot-note he begs the reader not to mistake the "I" for the author's own personality, as it was adopted merely for convenience of narration.—Translator.

there had been quarrels between them and their parents,[1] and Alexyéi Sergyéitch hardly ever mentioned them.

I see that ancient, truly noble steppe home as though it stood before me now. Of one story, with a huge mezzanine,[2] erected at the beginning of the present century from wonderfully thick pine beams—such beams were brought at that epoch from the Zhízdrin pine forests; there is no trace of them nowadays!—it was very spacious and contained a multitude of rooms, which were decidedly low-ceiled and dark, it is true, and the windows were mere slits in the walls, for the sake of warmth. As was proper, the offices and the house-serfs' cottages surrounded the manor-house on all sides, and a park adjoined it, small but with fine fruit-trees, pellucid apples and seedless pears; for ten versts round about stretched out the flat, black-loam steppe. There was no lofty object for the eye: neither a tree nor a belfry; only here and there a windmill reared itself aloft with holes in its wings; it was a regular Sukhodól! (Dry Valley). Inside the house the rooms were filled with ordinary, plain furniture; rather unusual was a verst-post which stood on a window-sill in the hall, and bore the following inscription:

[1] The Russian expression is: "A black cat had run between them."—TRANSLATOR.

[2] In Russia a partial second story, over the centre, or the centre and ends of the main story, is called thus.—TRANSLATOR.

"If thou walkest 68 times around this hall,[1] thou wilt have gone a verst; if thou goest 87 times from the extreme corner of the drawing-room to the right corner of the billiard-room, thou wilt have gone a verst,"—and so forth. But what most impressed the guest who arrived for the first time was the great number of pictures hung on the walls, for the most part the work of so-called Italian masters: ancient landscapes, and mythological and religious subjects. But as all these pictures had turned very black, and had even become warped, all that met the eye was patches of flesh-colour, or a billowy red drapery on an invisible body—or an arch which seemed suspended in the air, or a dishevelled tree with blue foliage, or the bosom of a nymph with a large nipple, like the cover of a soup-tureen; a sliced watermelon, with black seeds; a turban, with a feather above a horse's head; or the gigantic, light-brown leg of some apostle or other, with a muscular calf and up-turned toes, suddenly protruded itself. In the drawing-room, in the place of honour, hung a portrait of the Empress Katherine II, full length, a copy from Lampi's well-known portrait—the object of special reverence, one may say adoration, for the master of the house. From the ceiling depended

[1] In Russian houses the "hall" is a combined ball-room, music-room, play-room, and exercising-ground; not the entrance hall.—TRANSLATOR.

crystal chandeliers in bronze fittings, very small and very dusty.

Alexyéi Sergyéitch himself was a very squat, pot-bellied, little old man, with a plump, but agreeable face all of one colour, with sunken lips and very vivacious little eyes beneath lofty eyebrows. He brushed his scanty hair over the back of his head; it was only since the year 1812 that he had discarded powder. Alexyéi Sergyéitch always wore a grey "redingote" with three capes which fell over his shoulders, a striped waistcoat, chamois-leather breeches and dark-red morocco short boots with a heart-shaped cleft, and a tassel at the top of the leg; he wore a white muslin neckerchief, a frill, lace cuffs, and two golden English "onions,"[1] one in each pocket of his waistcoat. In his right hand he generally held an enamelled snuff-box with "Spanish" snuff, while his left rested on a cane with a silver handle which had been worn quite smooth with long use. Alexyéi Sergyéitch had a shrill, nasal voice, and was incessantly smiling, amiably, but somewhat patronisingly, not without a certain self-satisfied pompousness. He also laughed in an amiable manner, with a fine, thin laugh like a string of wax pearls. He was courteous and affable, in the ancient manner of Katherine's day, and moved his hands slowly and with a circular motion, also in ancient style.

[1] We should call such a watch a "turnip."—TRANSLATOR.

On account of his weak legs he could not walk, but he was wont to trip with hurried little steps from one arm-chair to another arm-chair, in which he suddenly seated himself—or, rather, he fell into it, as softly as though he had been a pillow.

As I have already said, Alexyéi Sergyéitch never went anywhere, and associated very little with the neighbours, although he was fond of society,—for he was loquacious! He had plenty of society in his own house, it is true: divers Nikanór Nikanóritches, Sevastyéi Sevastyéitches, Fedúlitches, and Mikhéitches, all poverty-stricken petty nobles, in threadbare kazák coats and short jackets, frequently from his own noble shoulders, dwelt beneath his roof, not to mention the poor gentlewomen in cotton-print gowns, with black kerchiefs on their shoulders, and worsted reticules in their tightly-clenched fingers,—divers Avdótiya Sávishnas, Pelagéya Mirónovnas, and plain Feklúskas and Arínkas, who received asylum in the women's wing. No less than fifteen persons ever sat down to Alexyéi Sergyéitch's table . . . . he was so hospitable! —Among all these parasites two individuals stood forth with special prominence: a dwarf named Janus or the Two-faced, a Dane,—or, as some asserted, of Jewish extraction,—and crazy Prince L. In contrast to the customs of that day the dwarf did not in the least serve as a butt

for the guests, and was not a jester; on the contrary, he maintained constant silence, wore an irate and surly mien, contracted his brows in a frown, and gnashed his teeth as soon as any one addressed a question to him. Alexyéi Sergyéitch also called him a philosopher, and even respected him. At table he was always the first to be served after the guests and the master and mistress of the house.—"God has wronged him," Alexyéi Sergyéitch was wont to say: "that was the Lord's will; but it is not my place to wrong him."

"Why is he a philosopher?" I asked one day. (Janus did not like me. No sooner would I approach him, than he would begin to snarl and growl hoarsely, "Stranger! don't bother me!")

"But God have mercy, why is n't he a philosopher?" replied Alexyéi Sergyéitch. "Just observe, my little gentleman, how finely he holds his tongue!"

"But why is he two-faced?"

"Because, my young sir, he has one face outside; there it is for you, ninny, and judge it. . . . But the other, the real one, he hides. And I am the only one who knows that face, and for that I love him. . . . Because 't is a good face. Thou, for example, gazest and beholdest nothing . . . . but even without words, I see when he is condemning me for anything; for he is strict! And always with reason. Which thing thou canst not

understand, young sir; but just believe me, an old man!"

The true history of the two-faced Janus—whence he had come, how he had got into Alexyéi Sergyéitch's house—no one knew. On the other hand, the story of Prince L. was well known to all. As a young man of twenty, he had come from a wealthy and distinguished family to Petersburg, to serve in a regiment of the Guards; the Empress Katherine noticed him at the first Court reception, and halting in front of him and pointing to him with her fan, she said, in a loud voice, addressing one of her favourites: "Look, Adám Vasílievitch, see what a beauty! A regular doll!" The blood flew to the poor young fellow's head. On reaching home he ordered his calash to be harnessed up, and donning his ribbon of the Order of Saint Anna, he started out to drive all over the town, as though he had actually fallen into luck.—"Crush every one who does not get out of the way!" he shouted to his coachman.—All this was immediately brought to the Empress's knowledge; an order was issued that he was to be adjudged insane and given in charge of his two brothers; and the latter, without the least delay, carried him off to the country and chained him up in a stone bag.—As they were desirous to make use of his property, they did not release the unfortunate man even when he recovered his senses and came

to himself, but continued to keep him incarcerated until he really did lose his mind.—But their wickedness profited them nothing. Prince L. outlived his brothers, and after long sufferings, found himself under the guardianship of Alexyéi Sergyéitch, who was a connection of his. He was a fat, perfectly bald man, with a long, thin nose and blue goggle-eyes. He had got entirely out of the way of speaking—he merely mumbled something unintelligible; but he sang the ancient Russian ballads admirably, having retained, to extreme old age, his silvery freshness of voice, and in his singing he enunciated every word clearly and distinctly. Something in the nature of fury came over him at times, and then he became terrifying. He would stand in one corner, with his face to the wall, and all perspiring and crimson,—crimson all over his bald head to the nape of his neck. Emitting a malicious laugh, and stamping his feet, he would issue orders that some one was to be castigated,—probably his brothers.—"Thrash!"—he yelled hoarsely, choking and coughing with laughter,—"scourge, spare not, thrash, thrash, thrash the monsters my malefactors! That 's right! That 's right!" Just before he died he greatly amazed and frightened Alexyéi Sergyéitch. He entered the latter's room all pale and quiet, and inclining his body in obeisance to the girdle, he first returned thanks for the asylum and oversight, and

then requested that a priest might be sent for; for Death had come to him—he had beheld her—and he must pardon all men and whiten himself.

"How was it that thou didst see her?" muttered the astounded Alexyéi Sergyéitch, who now heard a coherent speech from him for the first time.—"What is she like? Has she a scythe?"

"No," replied Prince L.—"She 's a plain old woman in a loose gown—only she has but one eye in her forehead, and that eye has no lid."

And on the following day Prince L. actually expired, after having fulfilled all his religious obligations and taken leave of every one intelligently and with emotion.

"That 's the way I shall die also," Alexyéi Sergyéitch was wont to remark. And, in fact, something similar happened with him—of which, later on.

But now let us return to our former subject. Alexyéi Sergyéitch did not consort with the neighbours, as I have already said; and they did not like him any too well, calling him eccentric, arrogant, a mocker, and even a Martinist who did not recognise the authorities, without themselves understanding, of course, the meaning of the last word. To a certain extent the neighbours were right. Alexyéi Sergyéitch had resided for nearly seventy years in succession in his Sukhodól, having almost no dealings whatever with the superior

authorities, with the military officials, or the courts. "The court is for the bandit, the military officer for the soldier," he was wont to say; 'but I, God be thanked, am neither a bandit nor a soldier." Alexyéi Sergyéitch really was somewhat eccentric, but the soul within him was not of the petty sort. I will narrate a few things about him.

I never found out authoritatively what were his political views, if, indeed, one can apply to him such a very new-fangled expression; but he was, in his way, rather an aristocrat than a noblyborn master of serfs. More than once he complained because God had not given him a son and heir "for the honour of the race, for the continuation of the family." On the wall of his study hung the genealogical tree of the Telyégins, with very profuse branches, and multitudinous circles in the shape of apples, enclosed in a gilt frame.

"We Telyégins,"[1] he said, "are a very ancient stock, existing from remote antiquity; there have been a great many of us Telyégins, but we have not run after foreigners, we have not bowed our backs, we have not wearied ourselves by standing on the porches of the mighty, we have not nourished ourselves on the courts, we have not earned

[1] The author is slightly sarcastic in the name he has chosen for this family, which is derived from *telyéga*, a peasant-cart.—TRANSLATOR.

wages, we have not pined for Moscow, we have not intrigued in Peter;[1] we have sat still, each on his place, his own master on his own land . . . . thrifty, domesticated birds, my dear sir!—Although I myself have served in the Guards, yet it was not for long, I thank you!"

Alexyéi Sergyéitch preferred the olden days. —"Things were freer then, more seemly, I assure you on my honour! But ever since the year one thousand and eight hundred" (why precisely from that year he did not explain), "this warring and this soldiering have come into fashion, my dear fellow. These military gentlemen have mounted upon their heads some sort of plumes made of cocks' tails, and made themselves like cocks; they have drawn their necks up tightly, very tightly . . . . they speak in hoarse tones, their eyes are popping out of their heads—and how can they help being hoarse? The other day some police corporal or other came to see me.—'I have come to you, Your Well-Born,' quoth he . . . . (A pretty way he had chosen to surprise me! . . . . for I know myself that I am well-born . . . .) 'I have a matter of business with you.' But I said to him: 'Respected sir, first undo the hooks on thy collar. Otherwise, which God forbid, thou wilt sneeze! Akh, what will become of thee! What will become of thee!—Thou wilt burst like a puff-ball. . . . And I shall be re-

[1] St. Petersburg.—Translator.

sponsible for it!' And how they drink, those military gentlemen—o-ho-ho! I generally give orders that they shall be served with champagne from the Don, because Don champagne and Pontacq are all the same to them; it slips down their throats so smoothly and so fast—how are they to distinguish the difference? And here 's another thing: they have begun to suck that sucking-bottle, to smoke tobacco. A military man will stick that same sucking-bottle under his moustache, between his lips, and emit smoke through his nostrils, his mouth, and even his ears —and think himself a hero! There are my horrid sons-in-law, for example; although one of them is a senator, and the other is some sort of a curator, they suck at the sucking-bottle also,—and yet they regard themselves as clever men! . . . ."

Alexyéi Sergyéitch could not endure smoking tobacco, nor dogs, especially small dogs.— " Come, if thou art a Frenchman, then keep a lap-dog. Thou runnest, thou skippest hither and thither, and it follows thee, with its tail in the air . . . . but of what use is it to fellows like me? "—He was very neat and exacting. He never spoke of the Empress Katherine otherwise than with enthusiasm, and in a lofty, somewhat bookish style: " She was a demi-god, not a human being!—Only contemplate yon smile, my good sir," he was wont to add, pointing at the Lampi portrait, " and admit that she was a demi-

god! I, in my lifetime, have been so happy as to have been vouchsafed the bliss of beholding yon smile, and to all eternity it will never be erased from my heart!"—And thereupon he would impart anecdotes from the life of Katherine such as it has never been my lot to read or hear anywhere. Here is one of them. Alexyéi Sergyéitch did not permit the slightest hint at the failings of the great Empress. "Yes, and in conclusion," he cried: "is it possible to judge her as one judges other people?—One day, as she was sitting in her powder-mantle, at the time of her morning toilet, she gave orders that her hair should be combed out. . . . And what happened? The waiting-woman passes the comb through it, and electric sparks fly from it in a perfect shower!—Then she called to her the body physician, Rodgerson, who was present on duty, and says to him: 'I know that people condemn me for certain actions; but dost thou see this electricity? Consequently, with such a nature and constitution as mine, thou mayest thyself judge, for thou art a physician, that it is unjust to condemn me, but they should understand me!'"

The following incident was ineffaceably retained in the memory of Alexyéi Sergyéitch. He was standing one day on the inner watch in the palace, and he was only sixteen years of age. And lo, the Empress passes him—he presents arms. . . . "And she," cried Alexyéi Ser-

gyéitch, again with rapture, "smiling at my youth and my zeal, deigned to give me her hand to kiss, and patted me on the cheek, and inquired who I was, and whence I came, and from what family? And then . . . ." (here the old man's voice generally broke) . . . "then she bade me give my mother her compliments and thank her for rearing her children so well. And whether I was in heaven or on earth, and how and whither she withdrew,—whether she soared up on high, or passed into another room,—I know not to this day!"

I often tried to question Alexyéi Sergyéitch about those olden days, about the men who surrounded the Empress. . . . But he generally evaded the subject. "What 's the use of talking about old times?"—he said . . . . "one only tortures himself. One says to himself,—'Thou wert a young man then, but now thy last teeth have vanished from thy mouth.' And there 's no denying it—the old times were good . . . . well, and God be with them! And as for those men—I suppose, thou fidgety child, that thou art talking about the accidental men? Thou hast seen a bubble spring forth on water? So long as it is whole and lasts, what beautiful colours play upon it! Red and yellow and blue; all one can say is, ''T is a rainbow or a diamond!'—But it soon bursts, and no trace of it remains. And that 's what those men were like."

"Well, and how about Potyómkin?" I asked one day.

Alexyéi Sergyéitch assumed a pompous mien. —"Potyómkin, Grigóry Alexándritch, was a statesman, a theologian, a nursling of Katherine's, her offspring, one must say. . . . But enough of that, my little sir!"

Alexyéi Sergyéitch was a very devout man and went to church regularly, although it was beyond his strength. There was no superstition perceptible in him; he ridiculed signs, the evil eye, and other "twaddle," yet he did not like it when a hare ran across his path, and it was not quite agreeable for him to meet a priest.[1] He was very respectful to ecclesiastical persons, nevertheless, and asked their blessing, and even kissed their hand every time, but he talked with them reluctantly.—"They emit a very strong odour," he explained; "but I, sinful man that I am, have grown effeminate beyond measure;—their hair is so long [2] and oily, and they comb it out in all directions, thinking thereby to show me respect, and they clear their throats loudly in the middle of conversation, either out of timidity or because they wish to please me in that way also. Well, but they remind me of my hour of death. But

[1] Both these are bad omens, according to superstitious Russians. —TRANSLATOR.

[2] Priests and monks in Russia wear their hair and beards long to resemble the pictures of Christ. Missionaries in foreign lands are permitted to conform to the custom of the country and cut it short.—TRANSLATOR.

be that as it may, I want to live a while longer. Only, little sir, don't repeat these remarks of mine; respect the ecclesiastical profession—only fools do not respect it; and I am to blame for talking nonsense in my old age."

Alexyéi Sergyéitch had received a scanty education,[1] like all nobles of that epoch; but he had completed it, to a certain degree, by reading. He read only Russian books of the end of the last century; he considered the newer writers unleavened and weak in style. During his reading he placed beside him, on a round, one-legged little table, a silver jug filled with a special effervescent kvas flavoured with mint, whose pleasant odour disseminated itself through all the rooms. He placed large, round spectacles on the tip of his nose; but in his later years he did not so much read as stare thoughtfully over the rims of the spectacles, elevating his brows, mowing with his lips and sighing. Once I caught him weeping, with a book on his knees, which greatly surprised me, I admit.

He recalled the following wretched doggerel:

O all-conquering race of man!
Rest is unknown to thee!
Thou findest it only
When thou swallowest the dust of the grave. . . .
Bitter, bitter is this rest!
Sleep, ye dead. . . . But weep, ye living!

[1] "Had been educated on copper coins" is the Russian expression. That is, had received a cheap education.—Translator.

These verses were composed by a certain Górmitch-Gormítzky, a roving poetaster, whom Alexyéi Sergyéitch had harboured in his house because he seemed to him a delicate and even subtle man; he wore shoes with knots of ribbon, pronounced his *o's* broadly, and, raising his eyes to heaven, he sighed frequently. In addition to all these merits, Górmitch-Gormítzky spoke French passably well, for he had been educated in a Jesuit college, while Alexyéi Sergyéitch only "understood" it. But having once drunk himself dead-drunk in a dram-shop, this same subtle Gormítzky displayed outrageous violence. He thrashed "to flinders" Alexyéi Sergyéitch's valet, the cook, two laundresses who happened along, and even an independent carpenter, and smashed several panes in the windows, yelling lustily the while: "Here now, I 'll just show these Russian sluggards, these unlicked katzápy!"[1]—And what strength that puny little man displayed! Eight men could hardly control him! For this turbulence Alexyéi Sergyéitch gave orders that the rhymster should be flung out of the house, after he had preliminarily been rolled in the snow (it happened in the winter), to sober him.

"Yes," Alexyéi Sergyéitch was wont to say, "my day is over; the horse is worn out. I used to keep poets at my expense, and I used to buy

[1] The nickname generally applied by the Little Russians to the Great Russians.—TRANSLATOR.

pictures and books from the Jews—and my geese were quite as good as those of Mukhán, and I had genuine slate-coloured tumbler-pigeons. . . . I was an amateur of all sorts of things! Except that I never was a dog-fancier, because of the drunkenness and the clownishness! I was mettlesome, untamable! God forbid that a Telyégin should be anything but first-class in everything! And I had a splendid horse-breeding establishment. . . And those horses came . . . . whence, thinkest thou, my little sir? —From those very renowned studs of the Tzar Iván Alexyéitch, the brother of Peter the Great. . . . . I 'm telling you the truth! All stallions, dark brown in colour, with manes to their knees, tails to their hoofs. . . . Lions! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! But what 's the use of regretting it? Every man has his limit fixed for him.—You cannot fly higher than heaven, nor live in the water, nor escape from the earth. . . . Let us live on a while longer, at any rate!"

And again the old man smiled and took a pinch of his Spanish tobacco.

His peasants loved him. Their master was kind, according to them, and not a heart-breaker. —Only, they also repeated that he was a worn-out steed. Formerly Alexyéi Sergyéitch had gone into everything himself: he had ridden out into the fields, and to the flour-mill, and to the

oil-mill and the storehouses, and looked in to the peasants' cottages; every one was familiar with his racing-drozhky,[1] upholstered in crimson plush and drawn by a well-grown horse with a broad blaze extending clear across its forehead, named "Lantern"—from that same famous breeding establishment. Alexyéi Sergyéitch drove him himself with the ends of the reins wound round his fists. But when his seventieth birthday came the old man gave up everything, and entrusted the management of his estate to the peasant bailiff Antíp, of whom he secretly stood in awe and called Micromegas (memories of Voltaire!), or simply "robber."

"Well, robber, hast thou gathered a big lot of stolen goods?" he would say, looking the robber straight in the eye.

"Everything is according to your grace," Antíp would reply merrily.

"Grace is all right, only just look out for thyself, Micromegas! Don't dare to touch my peasants, my subjects behind my back! They will make complaint .... my cane is not far off, seest thou?"

"I always keep your little cane well in mind, dear little father Alexyéi Sergyéitch," replied Antíp-Micromegas, stroking his beard.

[1] The racing-drozhky is frequently used in the country. It consists of a plank, without springs, mounted on four small wheels of equal size. The driver sits flat on the plank, which may or may not be upholstered.—TRANSLATOR.

"That 's right, keep it in mind!" and master and bailiff laughed in each other's faces.

With his house-serfs, with his serfs in general, with his "subjects" (Alexyéi Sergyéitch loved that word), he dealt gently.—"Because, judge for thyself, little nephew, if thou hast nothing of thine own save the cross on thy neck,[1] and that a brass one, don't hanker after other folks' things. . . . What sense is there in that?" There is no denying the fact that no one even thought of the so-called problem of the serfs at that epoch; and it could not disturb Alexyéi Sergyéitch. He very calmly ruled his "subjects"; but he condemned bad landed proprietors and called them the enemies of their class.

He divided the nobles in general into three categories: the judicious, "of whom there are not many"; the profligate, "of whom there is a goodly number"; and the licentious, "of whom there are enough to dam a pond." And if any one of them was harsh and oppressive to his subjects, that man was guilty in the sight of God, and culpable in the sight of men!—Yes; the house-serfs led an easy life in the old man's house; the "subjects behind his back" were less well off, as a matter of course, despite the cane wherewith he threatened Micromegas.—And how many there were of them—of those house-

[1] The baptismal cross.—TRANSLATOR.

serfs—in his manor! And for the most part they were old, sinewy, hairy, grumbling, stoop-shouldered, clad in long-skirted nankeen kaftans, and imbued with a strong acrid odour! And in the women's department nothing was to be heard but the trampling of bare feet, and the rustling of petticoats.—The head valet was named Irinárkh, and Alexyéi Sergyéitch always summoned him with a long-drawn-out call: "I-ri-na-a-árkh!"—He called the others: "Young fellow! Boy! What subject is there?!"—He could not endure bells. "God have mercy, this is no tavern!" And what amazed me was, that no matter at what time Alexyéi Sergyéitch called his valet, the man instantly presented himself, just as though he had sprung out of the earth, and placing his heels together, and putting his hands behind his back, stood before his master a grim and, as it were, an irate but zealous servant!

Alexyéi Sergyéitch was lavish beyond his means; but he did not like to be called "benefactor."—"What sort of a benefactor am I to you, sir? . . . I 'm doing myself a favour, not you, my good sir!" (When he was angry or indignant he always called people "you.")—"To a beggar give once, give twice, give thrice," he was wont to say. . . . "Well, and if he returns for the fourth time—give to him yet again, only add therewith: 'My good man, thou shouldst

work with something else besides thy mouth all the time.' "

"Uncle," I used to ask him, "what if the beggar should return for the fifth time after that?"

"Why, then, do thou give to him for the fifth time."

The sick people who appealed to him for aid he had cured at his own expense, although he himself did not believe in doctors, and never sent for them.—"My deceased mother," he asserted, "used to heal all maladies with olive-oil and salt; she both administered it internally and rubbed it on externally, and everything passed off splendidly. And who was my mother? She had her birth under Peter the First—only think of that!"

Alexyéi Sergyéitch was a Russian man in every respect; he loved Russian viands, he loved Russian songs, but the accordion, "a factory invention," he detested; he loved to watch the maidens in their choral songs, the women in their dances. In his youth, it was said, he had sung rollickingly and danced with agility. He loved to steam himself in the bath,—and steamed himself so energetically that Irinárkh, who served him as bath-attendant, thrashed him with a birch-besom soaked in beer, rubbed him down with shredded linden bark,[1] then with a bit of woollen

[1] The bath-besom is made of birch-twigs with the leaves attached, and is soaked in hot water (or in beer) to keep it soft. The mas-

cloth, rolled a soap bladder over his master's shoulders,—this faithfully-devoted Irinárkh was accustomed to say every time, as he climbed down from the shelf as red as "a new brass statue": "Well, for this time I, the servant of God, Irinárkh Tolobyéeff, am still whole. . . . . What will happen next time?"

And Alexyéi Sergyéitch spoke splendid Russian, somewhat old-fashioned, but piquant and pure as spring water, constantly interspersing his speech with his pet words: "honour bright," "God have mercy," "at any rate," "sir," and "little sir." . . . .

Enough concerning him, however. Let us talk about Alexyéi Sergyéitch's spouse, Malánya Pávlovna.

Malánya Pávlovna was a native of Moscow, and had been accounted the greatest beauty in town, *la Vénus de Moscou.*—When I knew her she was already a gaunt old woman, with delicate but insignificant features, little curved hare-like teeth in a tiny little mouth, with a multitude of tight little curls on her forehead, and dyed eyebrows. She constantly wore a pyramidal cap with rose-coloured ribbons, a high ruff around her neck, a short white gown and prunella shoes with red heels; and over her gown she wore a

sage administered with the besom is delightful. The peasants often use besoms of nettles, as a luxury. The shredded linden bark is used as a sponge.—TRANSLATOR.

jacket of blue satin, with the sleeve depending from the right shoulder. She had worn precisely such a toilet on St. Peter's day, 1789! On that day, being still a maiden, she had gone with her relatives to the Khodýnskoe Field,[1] to see the famous prize-fight arranged by the Orlóffs.

"And Count Alexyéi Grigórievitch . . . ." (oh, how many times did I hear that tale!), . . . "having descried me, approached, made a low obeisance, holding his hat in both hands, and spake thus: 'My stunning beauty, why dost thou allow that sleeve to hang from thy shoulder? Is it that thou wishest to have a match at fisticuffs with me? . . . With pleasure; only I tell thee beforehand that thou hast vanquished me —I surrender!—and I am thy captive!'—and every one stared at us and marvelled."

And so she had worn that style of toilet ever since.

"Only, I wore no cap then, but a hat *à la bergère de Trianon;* and although I was powdered, yet my hair gleamed through it like gold!"

Malánya Pávlovna was stupid to sanctity, as the saying goes; she chattered at random, and did not herself quite know what issued from her mouth—but it was chiefly about Orlóff.—Orlóff had become, one may say, the principal in-

[1] The great manœuvre plain, near which the Moscow garrison is lodged, in the vicinity of Petrórsky Park and Palace. Here the disaster took place during the coronation festivities of the present Emperor.—TRANSLATOR.

terest of her life. She usually entered—no! she floated into—the room, moving her head in a measured way like a peacock, came to a halt in the middle of it, with one foot turned out in a strange sort of way, and holding the pendent sleeve in two fingers (that must have been the pose which had pleased Orlóff once on a time), she looked about her with arrogant carelessness, as befits a beauty,—she even sniffed and whispered "The idea!" exactly as though some important cavalier-adorer were besieging her with compliments,—then suddenly walked on, clattering her heels and shrugging her shoulders.—She also took Spanish snuff out of a tiny bonbon box, scooping it out with a tiny golden spoon, and from time to time, especially when a new person made his appearance, she raised—not to her eyes, but to her nose (her vision was excellent)—a double lorgnette in the shape of a pair of horns, showing off and twisting about her little white hand with one finger standing out apart.

How many times did Malánya Pávlovna describe to me her wedding in the Church of the Ascension, "which is on the Arbát Square—such a fine church!—and all Moscow was present at it . . . . there was such a crush! 'T was frightful! There were equipages drawn by six horses, golden carriages, runners . . . . one of Count Zavadóvsky's runners even fell under the wheels!

And the bishop himself married us,[1] and what an address he delivered! Everybody wept—wherever I looked there was nothing but tears, tears . . . . and the Governor-General's horses were tiger-coloured. . . . And how many, many flowers people brought! . . . They overwhelmed us with flowers! And one foreigner, a rich, very rich man, shot himself for love on that occasion, and Orlóff was present also. . . . And approaching Alexyéi Sergyéitch he congratulated him and called him a lucky dog. . . . 'Thou art a lucky dog, brother gaper!' he said. And in reply Alexyéi Sergyéitch made such a wonderful obeisance, and swept the plume of his hat along the floor from left to right . . . as much as to say: 'There is a line drawn now, Your Radiance, between you and my spouse which you must not step across!'—And Orlóff, Alexyéi Grigórievitch, immediately understood and lauded him.—Oh, what a man he was! What a man! And then, on another occasion, Alexis and I were at a ball in his house—I was already married—and what magnificent diamond but-

[1] It is very rarely that a bishop performs the marriage ceremony. All bishops are monks; and monks are not supposed to perform ceremonies connected with the things which they have renounced. The exceptions are when monks are appointed parish priests (as in some of the American parishes, for instance), and, therefore, must fulfil the obligations of a married parish priest; or when the chaplain-monk on war-ships is called upon, at times, to minister to scattered Orthodox, in a port which has no settled priest.—TRANSLATOR.

tons he wore! And I could not restrain myself, but praised them. 'What splendid diamonds you have, Count!' And thereupon he took a knife from the table, cut off one button and presented it to me—saying: 'You have in your eyes, my dear little dove, diamonds a hundredfold finer; just stand before the mirror and compare them.' And I did stand there, and he stood beside me.—'Well? Who is right?'—says he—and keeps rolling his eyes all round me. And then Alexyéi Sergyéitch was greatly dismayed; but I said to him: 'Alexis,' I said to him, 'please do not be dismayed; thou shouldst know me better!' And he answered me: 'Be at ease, Mélanie!'—And those same diamonds I now have encircling a medallion of Alexyéi Grigórievitch —I think, my dear, that thou hast seen me wear it on my shoulder on festival days, on a ribbon of St. George—because he was a very brave hero, a cavalier of the Order of St. George: he burned the Turks!" [1]

Notwithstanding all this, Malánya Pávlovna was a very kind woman; she was easy to please. —"She does n't nag you, and she does n't sneer at you," the maids said of her.—Malánya Pávlovna was passionately fond of all sweets, and a special old woman, who occupied herself with nothing but the preserves, and therefore was

[1] The Order of St. George, with its black and orange ribbon, must be won by great personal bravery—like the Victoria Cross.—TRANSLATOR.

called the preserve-woman, brought to her, half a score of times in a day, a Chinese plate now with candied rose-leaves, again with barberries in honey, or orange sherbet. Malánya Pávlovna feared solitude—dreadful thoughts come then—and was almost constantly surrounded by female hangers-on whom she urgently entreated: "Talk, talk! Why do you sit there and do nothing but warm your seats?"—and they began to twitter like canary-birds. Being no less devout than Alexyéi Sergyéitch, she was very fond of praying; but as, according to her own words, she had not learned to recite prayers well, she kept for that purpose the widow of a deacon, who prayed so tastily! She would never stumble to all eternity! And, in fact, that deacon's widow understood how to utter prayerful words in an irrepressible sort of way, without a break even when she inhaled or exhaled her breath—and Malánya Pávlovna listened and melted with emotion. She had another widow also attached to her service; the latter's duty consisted in telling her stories at night,—"but only old ones," entreated Malánya Pávlovna, "those I already know; all the new ones are spurious."

Malánya Pávlovna was very frivolous and sometimes suspicious. All of a sudden she would take some idea into her head. She did not like the dwarf Janus, for example; it always seemed to her as though he would suddenly start in and

begin to shriek: "But do you know who I am? A Buryát Prince! So, then, submit!"—And if she did not, he would set fire to the house out of melancholy. Malánya Pávlovna was as lavish as Alexyéi Sergyéitch; but she never gave money—she did not wish to soil her pretty little hands—but kerchiefs, ear-rings, gowns, ribbons, or she would send a patty from the table, or a bit of the roast, or if not that, a glass of wine. She was also fond of regaling the peasant-women on holidays. They would begin to dance, and she would click her heels and strike an attitude.

Alexyéi Sergyéitch was very well aware that his wife was stupid; but he had trained himself, almost from the first year of his married life, to pretend that she was very keen of tongue and fond of saying stinging things. As soon as she got to chattering he would immediately shake his little finger at her and say: "Okh, what a naughty little tongue! What a naughty little tongue! Won't it catch it in the next world! It will be pierced with red-hot needles!"—But Malánya Pávlovna did not take offence at this; on the contrary, she seemed to feel flattered at hearing such remarks—as much as to say: "Well, I can't help it! It is n't my fault that I was born witty!"

Malánya Pávlovna worshipped her husband, and all her life remained an exemplary and faithful wife. But there had been an "object" in

her life also, a young nephew, a hussar, who had been slain, so she assumed, in a duel on her account—but, according to more trustworthy information, he had died from a blow received on the head from a billiard-cue, in tavern company. The water-colour portrait of this "object" was preserved by her in a secret casket. Malánya Pávlovna crimsoned to the very ears every time she alluded to Kapítonushka—that was the "object's" name;—while Alexyéi Sergyéitch scowled intentionally, again menaced his wife with his little finger and said, "Trust not a horse in the meadow, a wife in the house! Okh, that Kapítonushka, Kupidónushka!"—Then Malánya Pávlovna bristled up all over and exclaimed:

"Alexis, shame on you, Alexis!—You yourself probably flirted with divers little ladies in your youth—and so you take it for granted...."

"Come, that will do, that will do, Malániushka," Alexyéi Sergyéitch interrupted her, with a smile;—"thy gown is white, and thy soul is whiter still!"

"It is whiter, Alexis; it is whiter!"

"Okh, what a naughty little tongue, on my honour, what a naughty little tongue!" repeated Alexyéi Sergyéitch, tapping her on the cheek.

To mention Malánya Pávlovna's "convictions" would be still more out of place than to mention those of Alexyéi Sergyéitch; but I once

chanced to be the witness of a strange manifestation of my aunt's hidden feelings. I once chanced, in the course of conversation, to mention the well-known Sheshkóvsky.[1] Malánya Pávlovna suddenly became livid in the face,—as livid as a corpse,—turned green, despite the layer of paint and powder, and in a dull, entirely-genuine voice (which very rarely happened with her —as a general thing she seemed always somewhat affected, assumed an artificial tone and lisped) said: "Okh! whom hast thou mentioned! And at nightfall, into the bargain!—Don't utter that name!" I was amazed; what significance could that name possess for such an inoffensive and innocent being, who would not have known how to devise, much less to execute, anything reprehensible?—This alarm, which revealed itself after a lapse of nearly half a century, induced in me reflections which were not altogether cheerful.

Alexyéi Sergyéitch died in his eighty-eighth year, in the year 1848, which evidently disturbed even him. And his death was rather strange. That morning he had felt well, although he no longer quitted his arm-chair at all. But suddenly he called to his wife: "Malániushka, come hither!"

"What dost thou want, Alexis?"

"It is time for me to die, that 's what, my darling."

[1] Head of the Secret Service under Alexander I.—TRANSLATOR.

"God be with you, Alexyéi Sergyéitch! Why so?"

"This is why. In the first place, one must show moderation; and more than that; I was looking at my legs a little while ago . . . they were strange legs—and that settles it!—I looked at my hands—and those were strange also! I looked at my belly—and the belly belonged to some one else!—Which signifies that I am devouring some other person's life.[1] Send for the priest; and in the meanwhile, lay me on my bed, from which I shall not rise again."

Malánya Pávlovna was in utter consternation, but she put the old man to bed, and sent for the priest. Alexyéi Sergyéitch made his confession, received the holy communion, took leave of the members of his household, and began to sink into a stupor. Malánya Pávlovna was sitting beside his bed.

"Alexis!" she suddenly shrieked, "do not frighten me, do not close thy dear eyes! Hast thou any pain?"

The old man looked at his wife.—"No, I have no pain . . . . but I find it . . . . rather difficult . . . . difficult to breathe." Then, after a brief pause:—"Malániushka," he said, "now life has galloped past—but dost thou remember our wedding . . . . what a fine young couple we were?"

[1] That is, living too long.—Translator.

"We were, my beauty, Alexis my incomparable one!"

Again the old man remained silent for a space.

"And shall we meet again in the other world, Malániushka?"

"I shall pray to God that we may, Alexis."—And the old woman burst into tears.

"Come, don't cry, silly one; perchance the Lord God will make us young again there—and we shall again be a fine young pair!"

"He will make us young, Alexis!"

"Everything is possible to Him, to the Lord," remarked Alexyéi Sergyéitch.—"He is a worker of wonders!—I presume He will make thee a clever woman also. . . . Come, my dear, I was jesting; give me thy hand to kiss."

"And I will kiss thine."

And the two old people kissed each other's hands.

Alexyéi Sergyéitch began to quiet down and sink into a comatose state. Malánya Pávlovna gazed at him with emotion, brushing the tears from her eyelashes with the tip of her finger. She sat thus for a couple of hours.

"Has he fallen asleep?" asked in a whisper the old woman who knew how to pray so tastily, peering out from behind Irinárkh, who was standing as motionless as a pillar at the door, and staring intently at his dying master.

"Yes," replied Malánya Pávlovna, also in a

whisper. And suddenly Alexyéi Sergyéitch opened his eyes.

"My faithful companion," he stammered, "my respected spouse, I would like to bow myself to thy feet for all thy love and faithfulness —but how am I to rise? Let me at least sign thee with the cross."

Malánya Pávlovna drew nearer, bent over. . . . But the hand which had been raised fell back powerless on the coverlet, and a few moments later Alexyéi Sergyéitch ceased to be.

His daughters with their husbands only arrived in time for the funeral; neither one of them had any children. Alexyéi Sergyéitch had not discriminated against them in his will, although he had not referred to them on his death-bed.

"My heart is locked against them," he had said to me one day. Knowing his kind-heartedness, I was surprised at his words.—It is a difficult matter to judge between parents and children.—"A vast ravine begins with a tiny rift," Alexyéi Sergyéitch had said to me on another occasion, referring to the same subject. "A wound an arshín long will heal over, but if you cut off so much as a nail, it will not grow again!"

I have an idea that the daughters were ashamed of their eccentric old folks.

A month later Malánya Pávlovna expired

also. She hardly rose from her bed again after the day of Alexyéi Sergyéitch's death, and did not array herself; but they buried her in the blue jacket, and with the medal of Orlóff on her shoulder, only minus the diamonds. The daughters shared those between them, under the pretext that those diamonds were to be used for the setting of holy pictures; but as a matter of fact they used them to adorn their own persons.

And now how vividly do my old people stand before me, and what a good memory I cherish of them! And yet, during my very last visit to them (I was already a student at the time) an incident occurred which injected some discord into the harmoniously-patriarchal mood with which the Telyégin house inspired me.

Among the number of the household serfs was a certain Iván, nicknamed "Sukhíkh—the coachman, or the little coachman, as he was called, on account of his small size, in spite of his years, which were not few. He was a tiny scrap of a man, nimble, snub-nosed, curly-haired, with a perennial smile on his infantile countenance, and little, mouse-like eyes. He was a great joker and buffoon; he was able to acquire any trick; he set off fireworks, snakes, played all card-games, galloped his horse while standing erect on it, flew higher than any one else in the swing, and even knew how to present Chinese shadows. There was no one who could

amuse children better than he, and he would have been only too glad to occupy himself with them all day long. When he got to laughing he set the whole house astir. People would answer him from this point and that—every one would join in. . . They would both abuse him and laugh.—Iván danced marvellously—especially "the fish."—The chorus would thunder out a dance tune, the young fellow would step into the middle of the circle, and begin to leap and twist about and stamp his feet, and then come down with a crash on the ground—and there represent the movements of a fish which has been thrown out of the water upon the dry land; and he would writhe about this way and that, and even bring his heels up to his neck; and then, when he sprang to his feet and began to shout, the earth would simply tremble beneath him! Alexyéi Sergyéitch was extremely fond of choral songs and dances, as I have already said; he could never refrain from shouting: "Send hither Vániushka! the little coachman! Give us 'the fish,' be lively!"—and a minute later he would whisper in ecstasy: "Akh, what a devil of a man he is!"

Well, then,—on my last visit this same Iván Sukhíkh comes to me in my room, and without uttering a word plumps down on his knees.

"What is the matter with thee, Iván?"

"Save me, master!"

"Why, what 's the trouble?"

And thereupon Iván related to me his grief.

He had been swapped twenty years previously by the Messrs. Sukhóy for another serf, a man belonging to the Telyégins—he had simply been exchanged, without any formalities and documents. The man who had been given in exchange for him had died, but the Messrs. Sukhóy had forgotten all about Iván and had left him in Alexyéi Sergyéitch's house as his property; his nickname alone served as a reminder of his origin.[1]—But lo and behold! his former owners had died also, their estate had fallen into other hands, and the new owner, concerning whom rumours were in circulation to the effect that he was a cruel man, a torturer, having learned that one of his serfs was to be found at Alexyéi Sergyéitch's without any passport and right, began to demand his return; in case of refusal he threatened to have recourse to the courts and a penalty—and he did not threaten idly, as he himself held the rank of Privy Councillor,[2] and had great weight in the government.[3] Iván, in his affright, darted to Alexyéi Sergyéitch. The old man was sorry for his dancer, and he offered to buy Iván from the privy councillor

[1] *Sukhóy*, dry; *Sukhíkh*, genitive plural (proper names are declinable), meaning, "one of the Sukhóys."—Translator.

[2] The third from the top in the Table of Ranks instituted by Peter the Great.—Translator.

[3] Corresponding, in a measure, to an American State.—Translator.

at a good price; but the privy councillor would not hear of such a thing; he was a Little Russian and obstinate as the devil. The poor fellow had to be surrendered.

"I have got used to living here, I have made myself at home here, I have eaten bread here, and here I wish to die," Iván said to me—and there was no grin on his face now; on the contrary, he seemed turned into stone. . . . "But now I must go to that malefactor. . . . Am I a dog that I am to be driven from one kennel to another with a slip-noose round my neck—and a 'take that'? Save me, master; entreat your uncle,—remember how I have always amused you. . . . Or something bad will surely come of it; the matter will not pass off without sin."

"Without what sin, Iván?"

"Why, I will kill that gentleman.—When I arrive I shall say to him: 'Let me go back, master; otherwise, look out, beware . . . . I will kill you.'"

If a chaffinch or a bullfinch could talk and had begun to assure me that it would claw another bird, it would not have caused me greater astonishment than did Iván on that occasion.—What! Ványa Sukhíkh, that dancer, jester, buffoon, that favourite of the children, and a child himself —that kindest-hearted of beings—a murderer! What nonsense! I did not believe him for a single moment. I was startled in the extreme

that he should have been able to utter such a word! Nevertheless, I betook myself to Alexyéi Sergyéitch. I did not repeat to him what Iván had said to me, but I tried in every way to beg him to see whether he could not set the matter right.

"My little sir," the old man replied to me, "I would be only too delighted, but how can I?—I have offered that Topknot[1] huge remuneration. I offered him three hundred rubles, I assure thee on my honour! but in vain. What is one to do? We had acted illegally, on faith, after the ancient fashion . . . . and now see what a bad thing has come of it! I am sure that Topknot will take Iván from me by force the first thing we know; he has a strong hand, the Governor eats sour cabbage-soup with him—the Topknot will send a soldier! I 'm afraid of those soldiers! In former days, there 's no denying it, I would have defended Iván,—but just look at me now, how decrepit I have grown. How am I to wage war?"—And, in fact, during my last visit I found that Alexyéi Sergyéitch had aged very greatly; even the pupils of his eyes had acquired a milky hue—like that in infants—and on his lips there appeared not the discerning smile of former days, but that strainedly-sweet, unconscious smirk which never

[1] The Great Russians' scornful nickname for a Little Russian.—TRANSLATOR.

leaves the faces of very old people even in their sleep.

I imparted Alexyéi Sergyéitch's decision to Iván. He stood a while, held his peace, and shook his head.—"Well," he said at last, "what is fated to be cannot be avoided. Only my word is firm. That is to say: only one thing remains for me . . . play the wag to the end.—Master, please give me something for liquor!" I gave it; he drank himself drunk—and on that same day he danced "the fish" in such wise that the maidens and married women fairly squealed with delight, so whimsically amusing was he.

The next day I went home, and three months later—when I was already in Petersburg—I learned that Iván had actually kept his word!—He had been sent to his new master; his master had summoned him to his study and announced to him that he was to serve as his coachman, that he entrusted him with a tróika of Vyátka horses,[1] and that he should exact a strict account from him if he treated them badly, and, in general, if he were not punctual.—"I 'm not fond of jesting," he said.—Iván listened to his master, first made obeisance to his very feet, and then informed him that it was as his mercy liked, but he could not be his servant.—"Release me on quit-

[1] Each coachman has his own pair or tróika of horses to attend to, and has nothing to do with any other horses which may be in the stable.—TRANSLATOR.

rent, Your High-Born," he said, " or make a soldier of me; otherwise there will be a catastrophe before long."

The master flared up.—" Akh, damn thee! What is this thou darest to say to me?—Know, in the first place, that I am ' Your Excellency,' and not ' Your High-Born '; in the second place, thou art beyond the age, and thy size is not such that I can hand thee over as a soldier; and, in conclusion,—what calamity art thou threatening me with? Art thou preparing to commit arson? "

" No, your Excellency, not to commit arson."

" To kill me, then, pray? "

Iván maintained a stubborn silence.—" I will not be your servant," he said at last.

" Here, then, I 'll show thee," roared the gentleman, " whether thou wilt be my servant or not!"—And after having cruelly flogged Iván, he nevertheless ordered that the tróika of Vyátka horses should be placed in his charge, and appointed him a coachman at the stables.

Iván submitted, to all appearances; he began to drive as coachman. As he was a proficient in that line his master speedily took a fancy to him,—the more so as Iván behaved very discreetly and quietly, and the horses throve under his care; he tended them so that they became as plump as cucumbers,—one could never leave off admiring them! The master began to drive out

more frequently with him than with the other coachmen. He used to ask: "Dost thou remember, Iván, how unpleasant was thy first meeting with me? I think thou hast got rid of thy folly?" But to these words Iván never made any reply.

So, then, one day, just before the Epiphany, the master set out for the town with Iván in his tróika with bells, in a broad sledge lined with rugs. The horses began to ascend a hill at a walk, while Iván descended from the box and went back to the sledge, as though he had dropped something.—The cold was very severe. The master sat there all wrapped up, and with his beaver cap drawn down over his ears. Then Iván pulled a hatchet out from under the skirts of his coat, approached his master from behind, knocked off his cap, and saying: "I warned thee, Piótr Petróvitch—now thou hast thyself to thank for this!"—he laid open his head with one slash. Then he brought the horses to a standstill, put the cap back on his murdered master's head, and again mounting the box, he drove him to the town, straight to the court-house.

"Here 's the general from Sukhóy for you, murdered; and I killed him.—I told him I would do it, and I have done it. Bind me!"

They seized Iván, tried him, condemned him to the knout and then to penal servitude.—The merry, bird-like dancer reached the mines—and there vanished forever. . . .

Yes; involuntarily—although in a different sense,—one repeats with Alexyéi Sergyéitch:—"The old times were good . . . . well, yes, but God be with them! I want nothing to do with them!"

# THE SONG OF LOVE TRIUMPHANT

(1881)

# THE SONG OF LOVE TRIUMPHANT

MDXLII

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Wage du zu irren und zu träumen!

SCHILLER.

THE following is what I read in an Italian manuscript:

## I

ABOUT the middle of the sixteenth century there dwelt in Ferrara—(it was then flourishing under the sceptre of its magnificent dukes, the patrons of the arts and of poetry)—there dwelt two young men, named Fabio and Muzio. Of the same age and nearly related, they were almost never separated; a sincere friendship had united them since their early childhood, and a similarity of fate had strengthened this bond. Both belonged to ancient families; both were wealthy, independent, and without family; the tastes and inclinations of both were similar. Muzio occupied himself with music, Fabio with painting. All Ferrara was proud of them as the finest

ornaments of the Court, of society, and of the city. But in personal appearance they did not resemble each other, although both were distinguished for their stately, youthful beauty. Fabio was the taller of the two, white of complexion, with ruddy-gold hair, and had blue eyes. Muzio, on the contrary, had a swarthy face, black hair, and in his dark-brown eyes there was not that merry gleam, on his lips not that cordial smile, which Fabio had; his thick eyebrows overhung his narrow eyelids, while Fabio's golden brows rose in slender arches on his pure, smooth forehead. Muzio was less animated in conversation also; nevertheless both friends were equally favoured by the ladies; for not in vain were they models of knightly courtesy and lavishness.

At one and the same time with them there dwelt in Ferrara a maiden named Valeria. She was considered one of the greatest beauties in the city, although she was to be seen only very rarely, as she led a retired life and left her house only to go to church;—and on great festivals for a walk. She lived with her mother, a noblyborn but not wealthy widow, who had no other children. Valeria inspired in every one whom she met a feeling of involuntary amazement and of equally involuntary tender respect: so modest was her mien, so little aware was she, to all appearance, of the full force of her charms. Some persons, it is true, thought her rather pale; the

glance of her eyes, which were almost always lowered, expressed a certain shyness and even timidity; her lips smiled rarely, and then but slightly; hardly ever did any one hear her voice. But a rumour was in circulation to the effect that it was very beautiful, and that, locking herself in her chamber, early in the morning, while everything in the city was still sleeping, she loved to warble ancient ballads to the strains of a lute, upon which she herself played. Despite the pallor of her face, Valeria was in blooming health; and even the old people, as they looked on her, could not refrain from thinking:—"Oh, how happy will be that young man for whom this bud still folded in its petals, still untouched and virgin, shall at last unfold itself!"

## II

Fabio and Muzio beheld Valeria for the first time at a sumptuous popular festival, got up at the command of the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole, son of the famous Lucrezia Borgia, in honour of some distinguished grandees who had arrived from Paris on the invitation of the Duchess, the daughter of Louis XII, King of France. Side by side with her mother sat Valeria in the centre of an elegant tribune, erected after drawings by Palladius on the principal square of Ferrara for the most honourable ladies of the city. Both

Fabio and Muzio fell passionately in love with her that day; and as they concealed nothing from each other, each speedily learned what was going on in his comrade's heart. They agreed between themselves that they would both try to make close acquaintance with Valeria, and if she should deign to choose either one of them the other should submit without a murmur to her decision.

Several weeks later, thanks to the fine reputation which they rightfully enjoyed, they succeeded in penetrating into the not easily accessible house of the widow; she gave them permission to visit her. From that time forth they were able to see Valeria almost every day and to converse with her;—and with every day the flame kindled in the hearts of both young men blazed more and more vigorously. But Valeria displayed no preference for either of them, although their presence evidently pleased her. With Muzio she occupied herself with music; but she chatted more with Fabio: she was less shy with him. At last they decided to learn their fate definitely, and sent to Valeria a letter wherein they asked her to explain herself and say on whom she was prepared to bestow her hand. Valeria showed this letter to her mother, and informed her that she was content to remain unmarried; but if her mother thought it was time for her to marry, she would wed the man of her mother's choice. The honourable widow shed a

few tears at the thought of parting from her beloved child; but there was no reason for rejecting the suitors: she considered them both equally worthy of her daughter's hand. But as she secretly preferred Fabio, and suspected that he was more to Valeria's taste also, she fixed upon him. On the following day Fabio learned of his happiness: and all that was left to Muzio was to keep his word and submit.

This he did; but he was not able to be a witness to the triumph of his friend, his rival. He immediately sold the greater part of his property, and collecting a few thousand ducats, he set off on a long journey to the Orient. On taking leave of Fabio he said to him that he would not return until he should feel that the last traces of passion in him had vanished. It was painful for Fabio to part from the friend of his childhood and his youth . . . . but the joyful anticipation of approaching bliss speedily swallowed up all other sentiments—and he surrendered himself completely to the transports of happy love.

He soon married Valeria, and only then did he learn the full value of the treasure which it had fallen to his lot to possess. He had a very beautiful villa at a short distance from Ferrara; he removed thither with his wife and her mother. A bright time then began for them. Wedded life displayed in a new and captivating light all

Valeria's perfections. Fabio became a remarkable artist,—no longer a mere amateur, but a master. Valeria's mother rejoiced and returned thanks to God as she gazed at the happy pair. Four years flew by unnoticed like a blissful dream. One thing alone was lacking to the young married couple, one thing caused them grief: they had no children . . . . but hope had not deserted them. Toward the end of the fourth year a great, and this time a genuine grief, visited them: Valeria's mother died, after an illness of a few days.

Valeria shed many tears; for a long time she could not reconcile herself to her loss. But another year passed; life once more asserted its rights and flowed on in its former channel. And, lo! one fine summer evening, without having forewarned any one, Muzio returned to Ferrara.

## III

During the whole five years which had elapsed since his departure, no one had known anything about him. All rumours concerning him had died out, exactly as though he had vanished from the face of the earth. When Fabio met his friend on one of the streets in Ferrara he came near crying out aloud, first from fright, then from joy, and immediately invited him to his

villa. There, in the garden, was a spacious, detached pavilion; he suggested that his friend should settle down in that pavilion. Muzio gladly accepted, and that same day removed thither with his servant, a dumb Malay—dumb but not deaf, and even, judging from the vivacity of his glance, a very intelligent man. . . . His tongue had been cut out. Muzio had brought with him scores of chests filled with divers precious things which he had collected during his prolonged wanderings.

Valeria was delighted at Muzio's return; and he greeted her in a cheerfully-friendly but composed manner. From everything it was obvious that he had kept the promise made to Fabio. In the course of the day he succeeded in installing himself in his pavilion; with the aid of his Malay he set out the rarities he had brought—rugs, silken tissues, garments of velvet and brocade, weapons, cups, dishes, and beakers adorned with enamel, articles of gold and silver set with pearls and turquoises, carved caskets of amber and ivory, faceted flasks, spices, perfumes, pelts of wild beasts, the feathers of unknown birds, and a multitude of other objects, the very use of which seemed mysterious and incomprehensible. Among the number of all these precious things there was one rich pearl necklace which Muzio had received from the Shah of Persia for a certain great and mysterious service; he asked Va-

leria's permission to place this necklace on her neck with his own hand; it seemed to her heavy, and as though endowed with a strange sort of warmth . . . . it fairly adhered to the skin. Toward evening, after dinner, as they sat on the terrace of the villa, in the shade of oleanders and laurels, Muzio began to narrate his adventures. He told of the distant lands which he had seen, of mountains higher than the clouds, of rivers like unto seas; he told of vast buildings and temples, of trees thousands of years old, of rainbow-hued flowers and birds; he enumerated the cities and peoples he had visited . . . . (their very names exhaled something magical). All the Orient was familiar to Muzio: he had traversed Persia and Arabia, where the horses are more noble and beautiful than all other living creatures; he had penetrated the depths of India, where is a race of people resembling magnificent plants; he had attained to the confines of China and Tibet, where a living god, the Dalai Lama by name, dwells upon earth in the form of a speechless man with narrow eyes. Marvellous were his tales! Fabio and Valeria listened to him as though enchanted.

In point of fact, Muzio's features had undergone but little change: swarthy from childhood, his face had grown still darker,—had been burned beneath the rays of a more brilliant sun, —his eyes seemed more deeply set than of yore,

that was all; but the expression of that face had become different: concentrated, grave, it did not grow animated even when he alluded to the dangers to which he had been subjected by night in the forests, deafened by the roar of tigers, by day on deserted roads where fanatics lie in wait for travellers and strangle them in honour of an iron goddess who demands human blood. And Muzio's voice had grown more quiet and even; the movements of his hands, of his whole body, had lost the flourishing ease which is peculiar to the Italian race.

With the aid of his servant, the obsequiously-alert Malay, he showed his host and hostess several tricks which he had been taught by the Brahmins of India. Thus, for example, having preliminarily concealed himself behind a curtain, he suddenly appeared sitting in the air, with his legs doubled up beneath him, resting the tips of his fingers lightly on a bamboo rod set upright, which not a little amazed and even alarmed Fabio and Valeria. . . "Can it be that he is a magician?" the thought occurred to her.—But when he set to calling out tame snakes from a covered basket by whistling on a small flute,—when, wiggling their fangs, their dark, flat heads made their appearance from beneath the motley stuff, Valeria became frightened and begged Muzio to hide away those horrors as quickly as possible.

At supper Muzio regaled his friends with wine of Shiraz from a round flask with a long neck; extremely fragrant and thick, of a golden hue, with greenish lights, it sparkled mysteriously when poured into the tiny jasper cups. In taste it did not resemble European wines: it was very sweet and spicy; and, quaffed slowly, in small sips, it produced in all the limbs a sensation of agreeable drowsiness. Muzio made Fabio and Valeria drink a cup apiece, and drank one himself. Bending over her cup, he whispered something and shook his fingers. Valeria noticed this; but as there was something strange and unprecedented in all Muzio's ways in general, and in all his habits, she merely thought: "I wonder if he has not accepted in India some new faith, or whether they have such customs there?"—Then, after a brief pause, she asked him: "Had he continued to occupy himself with music during the time of his journeys?"—In reply Muzio ordered the Malay to bring him his Indian violin. It resembled those of the present day, only, instead of four strings it had three; a bluish snake-skin was stretched across its top, and the slender bow of reed was semi-circular in form, and on its very tip glittered a pointed diamond.

Muzio first played several melancholy airs,—which were, according to his assertion, popular ballads,—strange and even savage to the Italian ear; the sound of the metallic strings was plain-

tive and feeble. But when Muzio began the last song, that same sound suddenly strengthened, quivered powerfully and resonantly; the passionate melody poured forth from beneath the broadly-handled bow,—poured forth with beautiful undulations, like the snake which had covered the top of the violin with its skin; and with so much fire, with so much triumphant joy did this song beam and blaze that both Fabio and Valeria felt a tremor at their heart, and the tears started to their eyes . . . . while Muzio, with his head bent down and pressed against his violin, with pallid cheeks, and brows contracted into one line, seemed still more concentrated and serious than ever, and the diamond at the tip of the bow scattered ray-like sparks in its flight, as though it also were kindled with the fire of that wondrous song. And when Muzio had finished and, still holding the violin tightly pressed between his chin and his shoulder, dropped his hand which held the bow—"What is that? What hast thou been playing to us?" Fabio exclaimed. —Valeria uttered not a word, but her whole being seemed to repeat her husband's question. Muzio laid the violin on the table, and lightly shaking back his hair, said, with a courteous smile: "That? That melody . . . . that song I heard once on the island of Ceylon. That song is known there, among the people, as the song of happy, satisfied love."

"Repeat it," whispered Fabio.

"No; it is impossible to repeat it," replied Muzio. "And it is late now. Signora Valeria ought to rest; and it is high time for me also. . . . I am weary."

All day long Muzio had treated Valeria in a respectfully-simple manner, like a friend of long standing; but as he took leave he pressed her hand very hard, jamming his fingers into her palm, staring so intently into her face the while that she, although she did not raise her eyelids, felt conscious of that glance on her suddenly-flushing cheeks. She said nothing to Muzio, but drew away her hand, and when he was gone she stared at the door through which he had made his exit. She recalled how, in former years also, she had been afraid of him . . . . and now she was perplexed. Muzio went off to his pavilion; the husband and wife withdrew to their bed-chamber.

## IV

VALERIA did not soon fall asleep; her blood was surging softly and languidly, and there was a faint ringing in her head . . . . from that strange wine, as she supposed, and, possibly, also from Muzio's tales, from his violin playing. . . . Toward morning she fell asleep at last, and had a remarkable dream.

It seems to her that she enters a spacious room

with a low, vaulted ceiling. . . . She has never seen such a room in her life. All the walls are set with small blue tiles bearing golden patterns; slender carved pillars of alabaster support the marble vault; this vault and the pillars seem semi-transparent. . . . A pale, rose-coloured light penetrates the room from all directions, illuminating all the objects mysteriously and monotonously; cushions of gold brocade lie on a narrow rug in the very middle of the floor, which is as smooth as a mirror. In the corners, barely visible, two tall incense-burners, representing monstrous animals, are smoking; there are no windows anywhere; the door, screened by a velvet drapery, looms silently black in a niche of the wall. And suddenly this curtain softly slips aside, moves away . . . . and Muzio enters. He bows, opens his arms, smiles. . . . His harsh arms encircle Valeria's waist; his dry lips have set her to burning all over. . . . She falls prone on the cushions. . . .

* * * * *

Moaning with fright, Valeria awoke after long efforts.—Still not comprehending where she is and what is the matter with her, she half raises herself up in bed and looks about her. . . . A shudder runs through her whole body. . . . Fabio is lying beside her. He is asleep; but his face, in the light of the round, clear moon, is as pale as that of a corpse . . . . it is more melan-

choly than the face of a corpse. Valeria awoke her husband—and no sooner had he cast a glance at her than he exclaimed: "What is the matter with thee?"

"I have seen . . . I have seen a dreadful dream," she whispered, still trembling. . . .

But at that moment, from the direction of the pavilion, strong sounds were wafted to them—and both Fabio and Valeria recognised the melody which Muzio had played to them, calling it the Song of Love Triumphant.—Fabio cast a glance of surprise at Valeria. . . . She closed her eyes, and turned away—and both, holding their breath, listened to the song to the end. When the last sound died away the moon went behind a cloud, it suddenly grew dark in the room. . . . The husband and wife dropped their heads on their pillows, without exchanging a word, and neither of them noticed when the other fell asleep.

## V

On the following morning Muzio came to breakfast; he seemed pleased, and greeted Valeria merrily. She answered him with confusion,—scrutinised him closely, and was startled by that pleased, merry face, those piercing and curious eyes. Muzio was about to begin his stories

again . . . . but Fabio stopped him at the first word.

"Evidently, thou wert not able to sleep in a new place? My wife and I heard thee playing the song of last night."

"Yes? Did you hear it?"—said Muzio.—"I did play it, in fact; but I had been asleep before that, and I had even had a remarkable dream."

Valeria pricked up her ears.—"What sort of a dream?" inquired Fabio.

"I seemed," replied Muzio, without taking his eyes from Valeria, "to see myself enter a spacious apartment with a vaulted ceiling, decorated in Oriental style. Carved pillars supported the vault; the walls were covered with tiles, and although there were no windows nor candles, yet the whole room was filled with a rosy light, just as though it had all been built of transparent stone. In the corners Chinese incense-burners were smoking; on the floor lay cushions of brocade, along a narrow rug. I entered through a door hung with a curtain, and from another door directly opposite a woman whom I had once loved made her appearance. And she seemed to me so beautiful that I became all aflame with my love of days gone by . . . ."

Muzio broke off significantly. Valeria sat motionless, only paling slowly . . . . and her breathing grew more profound.

"Then," pursued Muzio, "I woke up and played that song."

"But who was the woman?" said Fabio.

"Who was she? The wife of an East Indian. I met her in the city of Delhi. . . . She is no longer among the living. She is dead."

"And her husband?" asked Fabio, without himself knowing why he did so.

"Her husband is dead also, they say. I soon lost sight of them."

"Strange!" remarked Fabio.—"My wife also had a remarkable dream last night—which she did not relate to me," added Fabio.

But at this point Valeria rose and left the room. Immediately after breakfast Muzio also went away, asserting that he was obliged to go to Ferrara on business, and that he should not return before evening.

## VI

Several weeks before Muzio's return Fabio had begun a portrait of his wife, depicting her with the attributes of Saint Cecilia.—He had made noteworthy progress in his art; the famous Luini, the pupil of Leonardo da Vinci, had come to him in Ferrara, and aiding him with his own advice, had also imparted to him the precepts of his great master. The portrait was almost finished; it only remained for him to complete the

face by a few strokes of the brush, and then Fabio might feel justly proud of his work.

When Muzio departed to Ferrara, Fabio betook himself to his studio, where Valeria was generally awaiting him; but he did not find her there; he called to her—she did not respond. A secret uneasiness took possession of Fabio; he set out in quest of her. She was not in the house; Fabio ran into the garden—and there, in one of the most remote alleys, he descried Valeria. With head bowed upon her breast, and hands clasped on her knees, she was sitting on a bench, and behind her, standing out against the dark green of a cypress, a marble satyr, with face distorted in a malicious smile, was applying his pointed lips to his reed-pipes. Valeria was visibly delighted at her husband's appearance, and in reply to his anxious queries she said that she had a slight headache, but that it was of no consequence, and that she was ready for the sitting. Fabio conducted her to his studio, posed her, and took up his brush; but, to his great vexation, he could not possibly finish the face as he would have liked. And that not beeause it was somewhat pale and seemed fatigued . . . . no; but he did not find in it that day the pure, holy expression which he so greatly loved in it, and which had suggested to him the idea of representing Valeria in the form of Saint Cecilia. At last he flung aside his brush, told his wife that he

was not in the mood, that it would do her good to lie down for a while, as she was not feeling quite well, to judge by her looks,—and turned his easel so that the portrait faced the wall. Valeria agreed with him that she ought to rest, and repeating her complaint of headache, she retired to her chamber.

Fabio remained in the studio. He felt a strange agitation which was incomprehensible even to himself. Muzio's sojourn under his roof, a sojourn which he, Fabio, had himself invited, embarrassed him. And it was not that he was jealous . . . . was it possible to be jealous of Valeria?—but in his friend he did not recognise his former comrade. All that foreign, strange, new element which Muzio had brought with him from those distant lands—and which, apparently, had entered into his very flesh and blood,—all those magical processes, songs, strange beverages, that dumb Malay, even the spicy odour which emanated from Muzio's garments, from his hair, his breath,—all this inspired in Fabio a feeling akin to distrust, nay, even to timidity. And why did that Malay, when serving at table, gaze upon him, Fabio, with such disagreeable intentness? Really, one might suppose that he understood Italian. Muzio had said concerning him, that that Malay, in paying the penalty with his tongue, had made a great sacrifice, and in compensation now pos-

sessed great power.—What power? And how could he have acquired it at the cost of his tongue? All this was very strange! Very incomprehensible!

Fabio went to his wife in her chamber; she was lying on the bed fully dressed, but was not asleep.—On hearing his footsteps she started, then rejoiced again to see him, as she had done in the garden. Fabio sat down by the bed, took Valeria's hand, and after a brief pause, he asked her, "What was that remarkable dream which had frightened her during the past night? And had it been in the nature of that dream which Muzio had related?"

Valeria blushed and said hastily—"Oh, no! no! I saw . . . some sort of a monster, which tried to rend me."

"A monster? In the form of a man?" inquired Fabio.

"No, a wild beast . . . . a wild beast!"—And Valeria turned away and hid her flaming face in the pillows. Fabio held his wife's hand for a while longer; silently he raised it to his lips, and withdrew.

The husband and wife passed a dreary day. It seemed as though something dark were hanging over their heads . . . . but what it was, they could not tell. They wanted to be together, as though some danger were menacing them;—but what to say to each other, they did not know.

Fabio made an effort to work at the portrait, to read Ariosto, whose poem, which had recently made its appearance in Ferrara, was already famous throughout Italy; but he could do nothing. . . . . Late in the evening, just in time for supper, Muzio returned.

## VII

He appeared calm and contented—but related few stories; he chiefly interrogated Fabio concerning their mutual acquaintances of former days, the German campaign, the Emperor Charles; he spoke of his desire to go to Rome, to have a look at the new Pope. Again he offered Valeria wine of Shiraz—and in reply to her refusal he said, as though to himself, "It is not necessary now."

On returning with his wife to their bedroom Fabio speedily fell asleep . . . . and waking an hour later was able to convince himself that no one shared his couch: Valeria was not with him. He hastily rose, and at the selfsame moment he beheld his wife, in her night-dress, enter the room from the garden. The moon was shining brightly, although not long before a light shower had passed over.—With widely-opened eyes, and an expression of secret terror on her impassive face, Valeria approached the bed, and fumbling for it with her hands, which were out-

stretched in front of her, she lay down hurriedly and in silence. Fabio asked her a question, but she made no reply; she seemed to be asleep. He touched her, and felt rain-drops on her clothing, on her hair, and grains of sand on the soles of her bare feet. Then he sprang up and rushed into the garden through the half-open door. The moonlight, brilliant to harshness, inundated all objects. Fabio looked about him and descried on the sand of the path traces of two pairs of feet; one pair was bare; and those tracks led to an arbour covered with jasmin, which stood apart, between the pavilion and the house. He stopped short in perplexity; and lo! suddenly the notes of that song which he had heard on the preceding night again rang forth! Fabio shuddered, and rushed into the pavilion. . . . Muzio was standing in the middle of the room, playing on his violin. Fabio darted to him.

"Thou hast been in the garden, thou hast been out, thy clothing is damp with rain."

"No . . . . I do not know . . . . I do not think . . . . that I have been out of doors . . . ." replied Muzio, in broken accents, as though astonished at Fabio's advent, and at his agitation.

Fabio grasped him by the arm.—"And why art thou playing that melody again? Hast thou had another dream?"

Muzio glanced at Fabio with the same surprise as before, and made no answer.

"Come, answer me!"

"The moon is steel, like a circular shield . . .
The river gleams like a snake . . . .
The friend is awake, the enemy sleeps—
The hawk seizes the chicken in his claws . . . .
Help!"

mumbled Muzio, in a singsong, as though in a state of unconsciousness.

Fabio retreated a couple of paces, fixed his eyes on Muzio, meditated for a space . . . . and returned to his house, to the bed-chamber.

With her head inclined upon her shoulder, and her arms helplessly outstretched, Valeria was sleeping heavily. He did not speedily succeed in waking her . . . . but as soon as she saw him she flung herself on his neck, and embraced him convulsively; her whole body was quivering.

"What aileth thee, my dear one, what aileth thee?" said Fabio repeatedly, striving to soothe her.

But she continued to lie as in a swoon on his breast. "Akh, what dreadful visions I see!" she whispered, pressing her face against him.

Fabio attempted to question her . . . . but she merely trembled. . . .

The window-panes were reddening with the first gleams of dawn when, at last, she fell asleep in his arms.

## VIII

On the following day Muzio disappeared early in the morning, and Valeria informed her husband that she intended to betake herself to the neighbouring monastery, where dwelt her spiritual father—an aged and stately monk, in whom she cherished unbounded confidence. To Fabio's questions she replied that she desired to alleviate by confession her soul, which was oppressed with the impressions of the last few days. As he gazed at Valeria's sunken visage, as he listened to her faint voice, Fabio himself approved of her plan: venerable Father Lorenzo might be able to give her useful advice, disperse her doubts. . . . Under the protection of four escorts, Valeria set out for the monastery, but Fabio remained at home; and while awaiting the return of his wife, he roamed about the garden, trying to understand what had happened to her, and feeling the unremitting terror and wrath and pain of indefinite suspicions. . . More than once he entered the pavilion; but Muzio had not returned, and the Malay stared at Fabio like a statue, with an obsequious inclination of his head, and a far-away grin—at least, so it seemed to Fabio—a far-away grin on his bronze countenance.

In the meantime Valeria had narrated every-

thing in confession to her confessor, being less ashamed than frightened. The confessor listened to her attentively, blessed her, absolved her from her involuntary sins,—but thought to himself: "Magic, diabolical witchcraft . . . . things cannot be left in this condition" . . . . and accompanied Valeria to her villa, ostensibly for the purpose of definitely calming and comforting her.

At the sight of the confessor Fabio was somewhat startled; but the experienced old man had already thought out beforehand how he ought to proceed. On being left alone with Fabio, he did not, of course, betray the secrets of the confessional; but he advised him to banish from his house, if that were possible, his invited guest who, by his tales, songs, and his whole conduct, had upset Valeria's imagination. Moreover, in the old man's opinion, Muzio had not been firm in the faith in days gone by, as he now recalled to mind; and after having sojourned so long in regions not illuminated by the light of Christianity, he might have brought thence the infection of false doctrines; he might even have dabbled in magic; and therefore, although old friendship did assert its rights, still wise caution pointed to parting as indispensable.

Fabio thoroughly agreed with the venerable monk. Valeria even beamed all over when her husband communicated to her her confessor's

counsel; and accompanied by the good wishes of both husband and wife, and provided with rich gifts for the monastery and the poor, Father Lorenzo wended his way home.

Fabio had intended to have an explanation with Muzio directly after supper, but his strange guest did not return to supper. Then Fabio decided to defer the interview with Muzio until the following day, and husband and wife withdrew to their bed-chamber.

## IX

VALERIA speedily fell asleep; but Fabio could not get to sleep. In the nocturnal silence all that he had seen, all that he had felt, presented itself to him in a still more vivid manner; with still greater persistence did he ask himself questions, to which, as before, he found no answer. Was Muzio really a magician? And had he already poisoned Valeria? She was ill . . . . but with what malady? While he was engrossed in painful meditations, with his head propped on his hand and restraining his hot breathing, the moon again rose in the cloudless sky; and together with its rays, through the semi-transparent window-panes, in the direction of the pavilion, there began to stream in—or did Fabio merely imagine it?—there began to stream in a breath resembling a faint, perfumed current of air. . . .

Now an importunate, passionate whisper began to make itself heard . . . and at that same moment he noticed that Valeria was beginning to stir slightly. He started, gazed; she rose, thrust first one foot, then the other from the bed, and, like a somnambulist, with her dull eyes strained straight ahead, and her arms extended before her, she advanced toward the door into the garden! Fabio instantly sprang through the other door of the bedroom, and briskly running round the corner of the house, he closed the one which led into the garden. . . . He had barely succeeded in grasping the handle when he felt some one trying to open the door from within, throwing their force against it . . . . more and more strongly . . . . then frightened moans resounded.

* * * * *

"But Muzio cannot have returned from the town, surely," flashed through Fabio's head, and he darted into the pavilion. . . .

What did he behold?

Coming to meet him, along the path brilliantly flooded with the radiance of the moonlight, also with arms outstretched and lifeless eyes staring widely—was Muzio. . . . Fabio ran up to him, but the other, without noticing him, walked on, advancing with measured steps, and his impassive face was smiling in the moonlight like the face of the Malay. Fabio tried to call him by name . . . . but at that moment he heard a win-

dow bang in the house behind him. . . . He glanced round. . . .

In fact, the window of the bedroom was open from top to bottom, and with one foot thrust across the sill stood Valeria in the window . . . and her arms seemed to be seeking Muzio, her whole being was drawn toward him.

Unspeakable wrath flooded Fabio's breast in a suddenly-invading torrent.—"Accursed sorcerer!" he yelled fiercely, and seizing Muzio by the throat with one hand, he fumbled with the other for the dagger in his belt, and buried its blade to the hilt in his side.

Muzio uttered a piercing shriek, and pressing the palm of his hand to the wound, fled, stumbling, back to the pavilion. . . . But at that same instant, when Fabio stabbed him, Valeria uttered an equally piercing shriek and fell to the ground like one mowed down.

Fabio rushed to her, raised her up, carried her to the bed, spoke to her. . . .

For a long time she lay motionless; but at last she opened her eyes, heaved a deep sigh, convulsively and joyously, like a person who has just been saved from inevitable death,—caught sight of her husband, and encircling his neck with her arms, pressed herself to his breast.

"Thou, thou, it is thou," she stammered. Gradually the clasp of her arms relaxed, her head sank backward, and whispering, with a blissful

smile:—"Thank God, all is over. . . . But how weary I am!"—she fell into a profound but not heavy slumber.

## X

Fabio sank down beside her bed, and never taking his eyes from her pale, emaciated, but already tranquil face, he began to reflect upon what had taken place . . . . and also upon how he ought to proceed now. What was he to do? If he had slain Muzio—and when he recalled how deeply the blade of his dagger had penetrated he could not doubt that he had done so—then it was impossible to conceal the fact. He must bring it to the knowledge of the Duke, of the judges . . . . but how was he to explain, how was he to narrate such an incomprehensible affair? He, Fabio, had slain in his own house his relative, his best friend! People would ask, "What for? For what cause? . . ." But what if Muzio were not slain?—Fabio had not the strength to remain any longer in uncertainty, and having made sure that Valeria was asleep, he cautiously rose from his arm-chair, left the house, and directed his steps toward the pavilion. All was silent in it; only in one window was a light visible. With sinking heart he opened the outer door—(a trace of bloody fingers still clung to it, and on the sand of the path

drops of blood made black patches)—traversed the first dark chamber . . . . and halted on the threshold, petrified with astonishment.

In the centre of the room, on a Persian rug, with a brocade cushion under his head, covered with a wide scarlet shawl with black figures, lay Muzio, with all his limbs stiffly extended. His face, yellow as wax, with closed eyes and lids which had become blue, was turned toward the ceiling, and no breath was to be detected: he seemed to be dead. At his feet, also enveloped in a scarlet shawl, knelt the Malay. He held in his left hand a branch of some unfamiliar plant, resembling a fern, and bending slightly forward, he was gazing at his master, never taking his eyes from him. A small torch, thrust into the floor, burned with a greenish flame, and was the only light in the room. Its flame did not flicker nor smoke.

The Malay did not stir at Fabio's entrance, but merely darted a glance at him and turned his eyes again upon Muzio. From time to time he raised himself a little, and lowered the branch, waving it through the air,—and his dumb lips slowly parted and moved, as though uttering inaudible words. Between Muzio and the Malay there lay upon the floor the dagger with which Fabio had stabbed his friend. The Malay smote the blood-stained blade with his bough. One minute passed . . . . then another. Fabio ap-

proached the Malay, and bending toward him, he said in a low voice: "Is he dead?"—The Malay bowed his head, and disengaging his right hand from beneath the shawl, pointed imperiously to the door. Fabio was about to repeat his question, but the imperious hand repeated its gesture, and Fabio left the room, raging and marvelling but submitting.

He found Valeria asleep, as before, with a still more tranquil face. He did not undress, but seated himself by the window, propped his head on his hand, and again became immersed in thought. The rising sun found him still in the same place. Valeria had not wakened.

## XI

Fabio was intending to wait until she should awake, and then go to Ferrara—when suddenly some one tapped lightly at the door of the bedroom. Fabio went out and beheld before him his aged major-domo, Antonio.

"Signor," began the old man, "the Malay has just informed us that Signor Muzio is ailing and desires to remove with all his effects to the town; and therefore he requests that you will furnish him with the aid of some persons to pack his things—and that you will send, about dinner-time, both pack- and saddle-horses and a few men as guard. Do you permit?"

"Did the Malay tell thee that?" inquired Fabio. "In what manner? For he is dumb."

"Here, signor, is a paper on which he wrote all this in our language, very correctly."

"And Muzio is ill, sayest thou?"

"Yes, very ill, and he cannot be seen."

"Has not a physician been sent for?"

"No; the Malay would not allow it."

"And was it the Malay who wrote this for thee?"

"Yes, it was he."

Fabio was silent for a space.

"Very well, take the necessary measures," he said at last.

Antonio withdrew.

Fabio stared after his servant in perplexity. —"So he was not killed?"—he thought . . . . and he did not know whether to rejoice or to grieve.—"He is ill?"—But a few hours ago he had beheld him a corpse!

Fabio returned to Valeria. She was awake, and raised her head. The husband and wife exchanged a long, significant look.

"Is he already dead?" said Valeria suddenly. —Fabio shuddered.

"What . . . he is not?—Didst thou . . . . Has he gone away?" she went on.

Fabio's heart was relieved.—"Not yet; but he is going away to-day."

"And I shall never, never see him again?"

"Never."

"And those visions will not be repeated?"

"No."

Valeria heaved another sigh of relief; a blissful smile again made its appearance on her lips. She put out both hands to her husband.

"And we shall never speak of him, never, hearest thou, my dear one. And I shall not leave this room until he is gone. But now do thou send me my serving-women . . . . and stay: take that thing!"—she pointed to a pearl necklace which lay on the night-stand, the necklace which Muzio had given her,—"and throw it immediately into our deep well. Embrace me—I am thy Valeria—and do not come to me until . . . . that man is gone."

Fabio took the necklace—its pearls seemed to have grown dim—and fulfilled his wife's behest. Then he began to roam about the garden, gazing from a distance at the pavilion, around which the bustle of packing was already beginning. Men were carrying out chests, lading horses . . . . but the Malay was not among them. An irresistible feeling drew Fabio to gaze once more on what was going on in the pavilion. He recalled the fact that in its rear façade there was a secret door through which one might penetrate to the interior of the chamber where Muzio had been lying that morning. He stole up to that door, found it unlocked, and pushing aside the folds of a heavy curtain, darted in an irresolute glance.

## XII

Muzio was no longer lying on the rug. Dressed in travelling attire, he was sitting in an arm-chair, but appeared as much of a corpse as at Fabio's first visit. The petrified head had fallen against the back of the chair, the hands lay flat, motionless, and yellow on the knees. His breast did not heave. Round about the chair, on the floor strewn with dried herbs, stood several flat cups filled with a dark liquid which gave off a strong, almost suffocating odour,—the odour of musk. Around each cup was coiled a small, copper-coloured serpent, which gleamed here and there with golden spots; and directly in front of Muzio, a couple of paces distant from him, rose up the tall figure of the Malay, clothed in a motley-hued mantle of brocade, girt about with a tiger's tail, with a tall cap in the form of a horned tiara on his head.

But he was not motionless: now he made devout obeisances and seemed to be praying, again he drew himself up to his full height, even stood on tiptoe; now he threw his hands apart in broad and measured sweep, now he waved them urgently in the direction of Muzio, and seemed to be menacing or commanding with them, as he contracted his brows in a frown and stamped his foot. All these movements evidently cost him great effort, and even caused him suffering: he breathed heavily, the sweat streamed from his

face. Suddenly he stood stock-still on one spot, and inhaling the air into his lungs and scowling, he stretched forward, then drew toward him his clenched fists, as though he were holding reins in them . . . . and to Fabio's indescribable horror, Muzio's head slowly separated itself from the back of the chair and reached out after the Malay's hands. . . . The Malay dropped his hands, and Muzio's head again sank heavily backward; the Malay repeated his gestures, and the obedient head repeated them after him. The dark liquid in the cups began to seethe with a faint sound; the very cups themselves emitted a faint tinkling, and the copper snakes began to move around each of them in undulating motion. Then the Malay advanced a pace, and elevating his eyebrows very high and opening his eyes until they were of huge size, he nodded his head at Muzio . . . . and the eyelids of the corpse began to flutter, parted unevenly, and from beneath them the pupils, dull as lead, revealed themselves. With proud triumph and joy—a joy that was almost malicious—beamed the face of the Malay; he opened his lips widely, and from the very depths of his throat a prolonged roar wrested itself with an effort. . . . Muzio's lips parted also, and a faint groan trembled on them in reply to that inhuman sound.

But at this point Fabio could endure it no longer: he fancied that he was witnessing some

devilish incantations! He also uttered a shriek and started off at a run homeward, without looking behind him,—homeward as fast as he could go, praying and crossing himself as he ran.

## XIII

THREE hours later Antonio presented himself before him with the report that everything was ready, all the things were packed, and Signor Muzio was preparing to depart. Without uttering a word in answer to his servant, Fabio stepped out on the terrace, whence the pavilion was visible. Several pack-horses were grouped in front of it; at the porch itself a powerful black stallion, with a roomy saddle adapted for two riders, was drawn up. There also stood the servants with bared heads and the armed escort. The door of the pavilion opened and, supported by the Malay, Muzio made his appearance. His face was deathlike, and his arms hung down like those of a corpse,—but he walked . . . . yes! he put one foot before the other, and once mounted on the horse, he held himself upright, and got hold of the reins by fumbling. The Malay thrust his feet into the stirrups, sprang up behind him on the saddle, encircled his waist with his arm,—and the whole procession set out. The horses proceeded at a walk, and when they made the turn in front of the house, Fabio fancied that on Mu-

zio's dark countenance two small white patches gleamed. . . . Could it be that he had turned his eyes that way?—The Malay alone saluted him . . . . mockingly, but as usual.

Did Valeria see all this? The shutters of her windows were closed . . . . but perhaps she was standing behind them.

## XIV

At dinner-time she entered the dining-room, and was very quiet and affectionate; but she still complained of being weary. Yet there was no agitation about her, nor any of her former constant surprise and secret fear; and when, on the day after Muzio's departure, Fabio again set about her portrait, he found in her features that pure expression, the temporary eclipse of which had so disturbed him . . . . and his brush flew lightly and confidently over the canvas.

Husband and wife began to live their life as of yore. Muzio had vanished for them as though he had never existed. And both Fabio and Valeria seemed to have entered into a compact not to recall him by a single sound, not to inquire about his further fate; and it remained a mystery for all others as well. Muzio really did vanish, as though he had sunk through the earth. One day Fabio thought himself bound to relate to Valeria precisely what had occurred on that fateful night

. . . . but she, probably divining his intention, held her breath, and her eyes narrowed as though she were anticipating a blow. . . . And Fabio understood her: he did not deal her that blow.

One fine autumnal day Fabio was putting the finishing touches to the picture of his Cecilia; Valeria was sitting at the organ, and her fingers were wandering over the keys. . . . Suddenly, contrary to her own volition, from beneath her fingers rang out that Song of Love Triumphant which Muzio had once played,—and at that same instant, for the first time since her marriage, she felt within her the palpitation of a new, germinating life. . . . Valeria started and stopped short. . . .

What was the meaning of this? Could it be . . .

With this word the manuscript came to an end.

# CLARA MÍLITCH

(1882)

# CLARA MÍLITCH

## A TALE

### I

IN the spring of 1878 there lived in Moscow, in a small wooden house on Shabólovka Street, a young man five-and-twenty years of age, Yákoff Arátoff by name. With him lived his aunt, an old maid, over fifty years of age, his father's sister, Platonída Ivánovna. She managed his housekeeping and took charge of his expenditures, of which Arátoff was utterly incapable. He had no other relations. Several years before, his father, a petty and not wealthy noble of the T * * * government, had removed to Moscow, together with him and Platonída Ivánovna who, by the way, was always called Platósha; and her nephew called her so too. When he quitted the country where all of them had constantly dwelt hitherto, old Arátoff had settled in the capital with the object of placing his son in the university, for which he had himself prepared him; he purchased for a trifling sum a small house on one of the remote streets, and installed himself therein with all his books and "preparations."

And of books and preparations he had many, for he was a man not devoid of learning . . . . "a supernatural eccentric," according to the words of his neighbours. He even bore among them the reputation of a magician: he had even received the nickname of "the insect-observer." He busied himself with chemistry, mineralogy, entomology, botany, and medicine; he treated voluntary patients with herbs and metallic powders of his own concoction, after the method of Paracelsus. With those same powders he had sent into the grave his young, pretty, but already too delicate wife, whom he had passionately loved, and by whom he had had an only son. With those same metallic powders he had wrought considerable havoc with the health of his son also, which, on the contrary, he had wished to reinforce, as he detected in his organisation anæmia and a tendency to consumption inherited from his mother. The title of "magician" he had acquired, among other things, from the fact that he considered himself a great-grandson—not in the direct line, of course—of the famous Bruce, in whose honour he had named his son Yákoff.[1] He was the sort of man who is called "very good-natured," but of a melancholy temperament, fussy, and timid, with a predilection for everything that was mysterious

[1] Yákoff (James) Daniel Bruce, a Russian engineer, of Scottish extraction, born in Moscow, 1670, became Grand Master of the Artillery in 1711, and died in 1735.—TRANSLATOR.

or mystical. . . . "Ah!" uttered in a half-whisper was his customary exclamation; and he died with that exclamation on his lips, two years after his removal to Moscow.

His son Yákoff did not, in outward appearance, resemble his father, who had been homely in person, clumsy and awkward; he reminded one rather of his mother. There were the same delicate, pretty features, the same soft hair of ash-blonde hue, the same plump, childish lips, and large, languishing, greenish-grey eyes, and feathery eyelashes. On the other hand in disposition he resembled his father; and his face, which did not resemble his father's, bore the stamp of his father's expression; and he had angular arms, and a sunken chest, like old Arátoff, who, by the way, should hardly be called an old man, since he did not last to the age of fifty. During the latter's lifetime Yákoff had already entered the university, in the physico-mathematical faculty; but he did not finish his course,—not out of idleness, but because, according to his ideas, a person can learn no more in the university than he can teach himself at home; and he did not aspire to a diploma, as he was not intending to enter the government service. He avoided his comrades, made acquaintance with hardly any one, was especially shy of women, and lived a very isolated life, immersed in his books. He was shy of women, although he had a very tender heart, and was

captivated by beauty. . . . He even acquired the luxury of an English keepsake, and (Oh, for shame!) admired the portraits of divers, bewitching Gulnares and Medoras which "adorned" it. . . . . But his inborn modesty constantly restrained him. At home he occupied his late father's study, which had also been his bedroom; and his bed was the same on which his father had died.

The great support of his whole existence, his unfailing comrade and friend, was his aunt, that Platósha, with whom he exchanged barely ten words a day, but without whom he could not take a step. She was a long-visaged, long-toothed being, with pale eyes in a pale face, and an unvarying expression partly of sadness, partly of anxious alarm. Eternally attired in a grey gown, and a grey shawl which was redolent of camphor, she wandered about the house like a shadow, with noiseless footsteps; she sighed, whispered prayers—especially one, her favourite, which consisted of two words: "Lord, help!"—and managed the housekeeping very vigorously, hoarding every kopék and buying everything herself. She worshipped her nephew; she was constantly fretting about his health, was constantly in a state of alarm, not about herself but about him, and as soon as she thought there was anything the matter with him, she would quietly approach and place on his writing-table a cup of

herb-tea, or stroke his back with her hands, which were as soft as wadding.

This coddling did not annoy Yákoff, but he did not drink the herb-tea, and only nodded approvingly. But neither could he boast of his health. He was extremely sensitive, nervous, suspicious; he suffered from palpitation of the heart, and sometimes from asthma. Like his father, he believed that there existed in nature and in the soul of man secrets, of which glimpses may sometimes be caught, though they cannot be understood; he believed in the presence of certain forces and influences, sometimes well-disposed but more frequently hostile .... and he also believed in science,—in its dignity and worth. Of late he had conceived a passion for photography. The odour of the ingredients used in that connection greatly disturbed his old aunt,—again not on her own behalf, but for Yásha's sake, on account of his chest. But with all his gentleness of disposition he possessed no small portion of stubbornness, and he diligently pursued his favourite occupation. "Platósha" submitted, and merely sighed more frequently than ever, and whispered "Lord, help!" as she gazed at his fingers stained with iodine.

Yákoff, as has already been stated, shunned his comrades; but with one of them he struck up a rather close friendship, and saw him frequently, even after that comrade, on leaving the univer-

sity, entered the government service, which, however, was not very exacting: to use his own words, he had "tacked himself on" to the building of the Church of the Saviour[1] without, of course, knowing anything whatever about architecture. Strange to say, that solitary friend of Arátoff's, Kupfer by name, a German who was Russified to the extent of not knowing a single word of German, and even used the epithet "German"[2] as a term of opprobrium,—that friend had, to all appearance, nothing in common with him. He was a jolly, rosy-cheeked young fellow with black, curly hair, loquacious, and very fond of that feminine society which Arátoff so shunned. Truth to tell, Kupfer breakfasted and dined with him rather often, and even—as he was not a rich man—borrowed small sums of money from him; but it was not that which made the free-and-easy German so diligently frequent the little house on Shabólovka Street. He had taken a liking to Yákoff's spiritual purity, his "ideality,"—possibly as a contrast to what he daily encountered and beheld;—or, perhaps, in that same attraction toward "ideality" the young man's German blood revealed itself. And Yákoff liked Kupfer's good-natured frankness; and in addi-

[1] The great cathedral in commemoration of the Russian triumph in the war of 1812, which was begun in 1837, and completed in 1883.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] *Nyémetz*, "the dumb one," meaning any one unable to speak Russian (hence, any foreigner), is the specific word for a German.—TRANSLATOR.

tion to this, his tales of the theatres, concerts, and balls which he constantly attended—in general of that alien world into which Yákoff could not bring himself to penetrate—secretly interested and even excited the young recluse, yet without arousing in him a desire to test all this in his own experience. And Platósha liked Kupfer; she sometimes thought him too unceremonious, it is true; but instinctively feeling and understanding that he was sincerely attached to her beloved Yásha, she not only tolerated the noisy visitor, but even felt a kindness for him.

## II

At the time of which we are speaking, there was in Moscow a certain widow, a Georgian Princess, —a person of ill-defined standing and almost a suspicious character. She was about forty years of age; in her youth she had, probably, bloomed with that peculiar oriental beauty, which so quickly fades; now she powdered and painted herself, and dyed her hair a yellow hue. Various, not altogether favourable, and not quite definite, rumours were in circulation about her; no one had known her husband—and in no one city had she lived for any length of time. She had neither children nor property; but she lived on a lavish scale,—on credit or otherwise. She held a salon, as the saying is, and received a de-

cidedly mixed company—chiefly composed of young men. Her whole establishment, beginning with her own toilette, furniture, and table, and ending with her equipage and staff of servants, bore a certain stamp of inferiority, artificiality, transitoriness . . . but neither the Princess herself nor her guests, apparently, demanded anything better. The Princess was reputed to be fond of music and literature, to be a patroness of actors and artists; and she really did take an interest in these "questions," even to an enthusiastic degree—and even to a pitch of rapture which was not altogether simulated. She indubitably did possess the æsthetic chord. Moreover, she was very accessible, amiable, devoid of pretensions, of affectation, and—a fact which many did not suspect—in reality extremely kind, tenderhearted and obliging. . . . Rare qualities, and therefore all the more precious, precisely in individuals of that stamp.

"A frivolous woman!" one clever person said concerning her, "and she will infallibly get into paradise! For she forgives everything—and everything will be forgiven her!"—It was also said concerning her that when she disappeared from any town, she always left behind her as many creditors as persons whom she had loaded with benefits. A soft heart can be pressed in any direction you like.

Kupfer, as was to be expected, was a visitor at

her house, and became very intimate with her . . . altogether too intimate, so malicious tongues asserted. But he always spoke of her not only in a friendly manner, but also with respect; he lauded her as a woman of gold—interpret that as you please!—and was a firm believer in her love for art, and in her comprehension of art!—So then, one day after dinner, at the Arátoffs', after having discussed the Princess and her evening gatherings, he began to urge Yákoff to break in upon his life of an anchorite for once, and permit him, Kupfer, to introduce him to his friend. At first Yákoff would not hear to anything of the sort.

"Why, what idea hast thou got into thy head?" exclaimed Kupfer at last. "What sort of a presentation is in question? I shall simply take thee, just as thou art now sitting there, in thy frock-coat, and conduct thee to her evening. They do not stand on ceremony in the least there, brother! Here now, thou art learned, and thou art fond of music" (there actually was in Arátoff's study a small piano, on which he occasionally struck a few chords in diminished sevenths) —"and in her house there is any quantity of that sort of thing! . . . And there thou wilt meet sympathetic people, without any airs! And, in conclusion, it is not right that at thy age, with thy personal appearance" (Arátoff dropped his eyes and waved his hand)—"yes, yes, with thy personal appearance, thou shouldst shun society, the

world, in this manner! I 'm not going to take thee to call on generals, seest thou! Moreover, I don't know any generals myself! . . . . Don't be stubborn, my dear fellow! Morality is a good thing, a thing worthy of respect. . . . But why give thyself up to asceticism? Assuredly, thou art not preparing to become a monk!"

Arátoff continued, nevertheless, to resist; but Platonída Ivánovna unexpectedly came to Kupfer's assistance. Although she did not quite understand the meaning of the word "asceticism," still she also thought that it would not be a bad idea for Yáshenka to divert himself, to take a look at people,—and show himself.—"The more so," she added, "that I have confidence in Feódor Feódoritch! He will not take thee to any bad place! . . . ."

"I 'll restore him to thee in all his pristine purity!" cried Kupfer, at whom Platonída Ivánovna, in spite of her confidence, kept casting uneasy glances; Arátoff blushed to his very ears—but he ceased to object.

It ended in Kupfer taking him, on the following day, to the Princess's evening assembly. But Arátoff did not remain there long. In the first place, he found at her house about twenty guests, men and women, who were, presumably, sympathetic, but who were strangers to him, nevertheless; and this embarrassed him, although he was obliged to talk very little: but he feared this most

of all. In the second place, he did not like the hostess herself, although she welcomed him very cordially and unaffectedly. Everything about her displeased him; her painted face, and her churned-up curls, and her hoarsely-mellifluous voice, her shrill laugh, her way of rolling up her eyes, her too *décolleté* bodice—and those plump, shiny fingers with a multitude of rings! . . . Slinking off into a corner, he now swiftly ran his eyes over the faces of all the guests, as though he did not even distinguish one from another; again he stared persistently at his own feet. But when, at last, an artist who had just come to town, with a drink-sodden countenance, extremely long hair, and a bit of glass under his puckered brow, seated himself at the piano, and bringing down his hands on the keys and his feet on the pedals, with a flourish, began to bang out a fantasia by Liszt on a Wagnerian theme, Arátoff could stand it no longer, and slipped away, bearing in his soul a confused and oppressive impression, athwart which, nevertheless, there pierced something which he did not understand, but which was significant and even agitating.

## III

Kupfer came on the following day to dinner; but he did not enlarge upon the preceding evening, he did not even reproach Arátoff for his hasty

flight, and merely expressed regret that he had not waited for supper, at which champagne had been served! (of Nízhegorod[1] fabrication, we may remark in parenthesis).

Kupfer probably understood that he had made a mistake in trying to rouse his friend, and that Arátoff was a man who positively was not adapted to that sort of society and manner of life. On his side, Arátoff also did not allude to the Princess or to the night before. Platonída Ivánovna did not know whether to rejoice at the failure of this first attempt or to regret it. She decided, at last, that Yásha's health might suffer from such expeditions, and regained her complacency. Kupfer went away directly after dinner, and did not show himself again for a whole week. And that not because he was sulking at Arátoff for the failure of his introduction,—the good-natured fellow was incapable of such a thing,—but he had, evidently, found some occupation which engrossed all his time, all his thoughts;—for thereafter he rarely came to the Arátoffs', wore an abstracted aspect, and soon vanished. . . . . Arátoff continued to live on as before; but some hitch, if we may so express ourselves, had secured lodgment in his soul. He still recalled something or other, without himself being quite aware what it was precisely,—and that "something" referred to the evening which he had

[1] Short for Nízhni Nóvgorod.—TRANSLATOR.

spent at the Princess's house. Nevertheless, he had not the slightest desire to return to it; and society, a section of which he had inspected in her house, repelled him more than ever. Thus passed six weeks.

And lo! one morning, Kupfer again presented himself to him, this time with a somewhat embarrassed visage.

"I know," he began, with a forced laugh, "that thy visit that evening was not to thy taste; but I hope that thou wilt consent to my proposal nevertheless . . . and wilt not refuse my request."

"What art thou talking about?" inquired Arátoff.

"See here," pursued Kupfer, becoming more and more animated; "there exists here a certain society of amateurs and artists, which from time to time organises readings, concerts, even theatrical representations, for philanthropic objects. . . ."

"And the Princess takes part?" interrupted Arátoff.

"The Princess always takes part in good works—but that is of no consequence. We have got up a literary and musical morning . . . . and at that performance thou mayest hear a young girl . . . . a remarkable young girl!—We do not quite know, as yet, whether she will turn out a Rachel or a Viardot . . . . for she sings splendidly, and declaims and acts. . . . She has talent

of the first class, my dear fellow! I am not exaggerating.—So here now . . . wilt not thou take a ticket?—Five rubles if thou wishest the first row."

"And where did this wonderful young girl come from?" asked Arátoff.

Kupfer grinned.—"That I cannot say. . . . Of late she has found an asylum with the Princess. The Princess, as thou knowest, is a patron of all such people. . . . And it is probable that thou sawest her that evening."

Arátoff started inwardly, faintly . . . . but made no answer.

"She has even acted somewhere in country districts," went on Kupfer, "and, on the whole, she was created for the theatre. Thou shalt see for thyself!"

"Is her name Clara?" asked Arátoff.

"Yes, Clara . . . ."

"Clara!" interrupted Arátoff again.—"It cannot be!"

"Why not?—Clara it is, . . . Clara Mílitch; that is not her real name . . . . but that is what she is called. She is to sing a romance by Glinka . . . . and one by Tchaikóvsky, and then she will recite the letter from 'Evgény Onyégin'[1]—Come now! Wilt thou take a ticket?"

[1] The famous letter from the heroine, Tatyána, to the hero, Evgény Onyégin, in Púshkin's celebrated poem. The music to the opera of the same name, which has this poem for its basis, is by Tchaikóvsky.—TRANSLATOR.

"But when is it to be?"

"To-morrow . . . . to-morrow, at half-past one, in a private hall, on Ostozhyónka Street. . . . I will come for thee. A ticket at five rubles? . . . Here it is. . . . No, this is a three-ruble ticket.—Here it is.—And here is the affiche.[1]—I am one of the managers."

Arátoff reflected. Platonída Ivánovna entered the room at that moment and, glancing at his face, was suddenly seized with agitation.—"Yásha," she exclaimed, "what ails thee? Why art thou so excited? Feódor Feódorovitch, what hast thou been saying to him?"

But Arátoff did not give his friend a chance to answer his aunt's question, and hastily seizing the ticket which was held out to him, he ordered Platonída Ivánovna to give Kupfer five rubles on the instant.

She was amazed, and began to blink her eyes. . . . Nevertheless, she handed Kupfer the money in silence. Yáshenka had shouted at her in a very severe manner.

"She 's a marvel of marvels, I tell thee!" cried Kupfer, darting toward the door.—"Expect me to-morrow!"

"Has she black eyes?" called Arátoff after him.

[1] Advertisements of theatres, concerts, and amusements in general, are not published in the daily papers, but in an *affiche*, printed every morning, for which a separate subscription is necessary.—TRANSLATOR.

"As black as coal!" merrily roared Kupfer, and disappeared.

Arátoff went off to his own room, while Platonída Ivánovna remained rooted to the spot, repeating: "Help, Lord! Lord, help!"

## IV

THE large hall in a private house on Ostozhyónka Street was already half filled with spectators when Arátoff and Kupfer arrived. Theatrical representations were sometimes given in that hall, but on this occasion neither stage-scenery nor curtain were visible. Those who had organised the "morning" had confined themselves to erecting a platform at one end, placing thereon a piano and a couple of music-racks, a few chairs, a table with a carafe of water and a glass, and hanging a curtain of red cloth over the door which led to the room set apart for the artists. In the first row the Princess was already seated, clad in a bright green gown; Arátoff placed himself at some distance from her, after barely exchanging a bow with her. The audience was what is called motley; it consisted chiefly of young men from various institutions of learning. Kupfer, in his quality of a manager, with a white ribbon on the lapel of his dress-coat, bustled and fussed about with all his might; the Princess was visibly excited, kept looking about her, launching smiles in

all directions, and chatting with her neighbours . . . . there were only men in her immediate vicinity.

The first to make his appearance on the platform was a flute-player of consumptive aspect, who spat out . . . . that is to say, piped out a piece which was consumptive like himself. Two persons shouted "Bravo!" Then a fat gentleman in spectacles, very sedate and even grim of aspect, recited in a bass voice a sketch by Shtchedrín;[1] the audience applauded the sketch, not him.— Then the pianist, who was already known to Arátoff, presented himself, and pounded out the same Liszt fantasia; the pianist was favoured with a recall. He bowed, with his hand resting on the back of a chair, and after each bow he tossed back his hair exactly like Liszt! At last, after a decidedly long intermission, the red cloth over the door at the rear of the platform moved, was drawn widely apart, and Clara Mílitch made her appearance. The hall rang with applause. With unsteady steps she approached the front of the platform, came to a halt, and stood motionless, with her large, red, ungloved hands crossed in front of her, making no curtsey, neither bending her head nor smiling.

She was a girl of nineteen, tall, rather broad-shouldered, but well built. Her face was swarthy,

[1] M. E. Saltikóff wrote his famous satires under the name of Shtchedrín.—TRANSLATOR.

partly Hebrew, partly Gipsy in type; her eyes were small and black beneath thick brows which almost met, her nose was straight, slightly upturned, her lips were thin with a beautiful but sharp curve; she had a huge braid of black hair, which was heavy even to the eye, a low, impassive, stony brow, tiny ears . . . . her whole countenance was thoughtful, almost surly. A passionate, self-willed nature,—not likely to be either kindly or even intelligent,—but gifted, was manifested by everything about her.

For a while she did not raise her eyes, but suddenly gave a start and sent her intent but not attentive glance, which seemed to be buried in herself, along the rows of spectators.

"What tragic eyes!" remarked a certain grey-haired fop, who sat behind Arátoff, with the face of a courtesan from Revel,—one of Moscow's well-known first-nighters and rounders. The fop was stupid and intended to utter a bit of nonsense . . . . but he had spoken the truth! Arátoff, who had never taken his eyes from Clara since she had made her appearance, only then recalled that he actually had seen her at the Princess's; and had not only seen her, but had even noticed that she had several times looked at him with particular intentness out of her dark, watchful eyes. And on this occasion also . . . . or did he merely fancy that it was so?—on catching sight of him in the first row, she seemed to be delighted,

seemed to blush—and again she gazed intently at him. Then, without turning round, she retreated a couple of paces in the direction of the piano, at which the accompanist, the long-haired foreigner, was already seated. She was to execute Glinka's romance, "As soon as I recognised thee . . . ." She immediately began to sing, without altering the position of her hands and without glancing at the notes. Her voice was soft and resonant,—a contralto,—she pronounced her words distinctly and forcibly, and sang monotonously, without shading but with strong expression.

"The lass sings with conviction," remarked the same fop who sat behind Arátoff,—and again he spoke the truth.

Shouts of "Bis!" "Bravo!" resounded all about, but she merely darted a swift glance at Arátoff, who was neither shouting nor clapping, —he had not been particularly pleased by her singing,—made a slight bow and withdrew, without taking the arm of the hairy pianist which he had crooked out like a cracknel. She was recalled . . . . but it was some time before she made her appearance, advanced to the piano with the same uncertain tread as before, and after whispering a couple of words to her accompanist, who was obliged to get and place on the rack before him not the music he had prepared but something else, —she began Tchaikóvsky's romance: "No, only he who hath felt the thirst of meeting". . . .

This romance she sang in a different way from the first—in an undertone, as though she were weary . . . and only in the line before the last, "He will understand how I have suffered,"—did a ringing, burning cry burst from her. The last line, "And how I suffer . . . . " she almost whispered, sadly prolonging the final word. This romance produced a slighter impression on the audience than Glinka's; but there was a great deal of applause. . . . Kupfer, in particular, distinguished himself: he brought his hands together in a peculiar manner, in the form of a cask, when he clapped, thereby producing a remarkably sonorous noise. The Princess gave him a large, dishevelled bouquet, which he was to present to the songstress; but the latter did not appear to perceive Kupfer's bowed figure, and his hand outstretched with the bouquet, and she turned and withdrew, again without waiting for the pianist, who had sprung to his feet with still greater alacrity than before to escort her, and who, being thus left in the lurch, shook his hair as Liszt himself, in all probability, never shook his!

During the whole time she was singing Arátoff had been scanning Clara's face. It seemed to him that her eyes, athwart her contracted lashes, were again turned on him. But he was particularly struck by the impassiveness of that face, that forehead, those brows, and only when

she uttered her passionate cry did he notice a row of white, closely-set teeth gleaming warmly from between her barely parted lips. Kupfer stepped up to him.

"Well, brother, what dost thou think of her?" he asked, all beaming with satisfaction.

"She has a fine voice," replied Arátoff, "but she does not know how to sing yet, she has had no real school." (Why he said this and what he meant by "school" the Lord only knows!)

Kupfer was surprised.—"She has no school," he repeated slowly. . . . "Well, now. . . . She can still study. But on the other hand, what soul! But just wait until thou hast heard her recite Tatyána's letter."

He ran away from Arátoff, and the latter thought: "Soul! With that impassive face!"—He thought that she bore herself and moved like a hypnotised person, like a somnambulist. . . . And, at the same time, she was indubitably. . . . Yes! she was indubitably staring at him.

Meanwhile the "morning" went on. The fat man in spectacles presented himself again; despite his serious appearance he imagined that he was a comic artist and read a scene from Gógol, this time without evoking a single token of approbation. The flute-player flitted past once more; again the pianist thundered; a young fellow of twenty, pomaded and curled, but with traces of tears on his cheeks, sawed out some va-

riations on his fiddle. It might have appeared strange that in the intervals between the recitations and the music the abrupt notes of a French horn were wafted, now and then, from the artists' room; but this instrument was not used, nevertheless. It afterward came out that the amateur who had offered to perform on it had been seized with a panic at the moment when he should have made his appearance before the audience. So at last, Clara Mílitch appeared again.

She held in her hand a small volume of Púshkin; but during her reading she never once glanced at it. . . . She was obviously frightened; the little book shook slightly in her fingers. Arátoff also observed the expression of dejection which *now* overspread her stern features. The first line: "I write to you . . . what would you more?" she uttered with extreme simplicity, almost ingenuously,—stretching both arms out in front of her with an ingenuous, sincere, helpless gesture. Then she began to hurry a little; but beginning with the line: "Another! Nay! to none on earth could I have given e'er my heart!" she regained her self-possession, and grew animated; and when she reached the words: "All, all life hath been a pledge of faithful meeting thus with thee,"—her hitherto rather dull voice rang out enthusiastically and boldly, and her eyes riveted themselves on Arátoff with a boldness and directness to match. She went on with the same enthu-

siasm, and only toward the close did her voice again fall, and in it and in her face her previous dejection was again depicted. She made a complete muddle, as the saying is, of the last four lines,—the little volume of Púshkin suddenly slipped from her hands, and she beat a hasty retreat.

The audience set to applauding and recalling her in desperate fashion. . . . One theological student,—a Little Russian,—among others, bellowed so loudly: "Muíluitch! Muíluitch!"[1] that his neighbour politely and sympathetically begged him to "spare himself, as a future proto-deacon!"[2] But Arátoff immediately rose and betook himself to the entrance. Kupfer overtook him. . . .

"Good gracious, whither art thou going?" he yelled:—"I'll introduce thee to Clara if thou wishest—shall I?"

"No, thanks," hastily replied Arátoff, and set off homeward almost at a run.

[1] The Little Russians (among other peculiarities of pronunciation attached to their dialect) use the guttural instead of the clear *i*.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] A bishop or priest in the Russian Church is not supposed to speak loudly, no matter how fine a voice he may possess. The deacon, on the contrary, or the proto-deacon (attached to a cathedral) is supposed to have a huge voice, and, especially at certain points, to roar at the top of his lungs. He sometimes cracks his voice—which is what the sympathetic neighbour was hinting at here.—TRANSLATOR.

## V

STRANGE emotions, which were not clear even to himself, agitated him. In reality, Clara's recitation had not altogether pleased him either . . . . altogether he could not tell precisely why. It had troubled him, that recitation, it had seemed to him harsh, unmelodious. . . . Somehow it seemed to have broken something within him, to have exerted some sort of violence. And those importunate, persistent, almost insolent glances—what had caused them? What did they signify?

Arátoff's modesty did permit him even a momentary thought that he might have pleased that strange young girl, that he might have inspired her with a sentiment akin to love, to passion! . . . And he had imagined to himself quite otherwise that as yet unknown woman, that young girl, to whom he would surrender himself wholly, and who would love him, become his bride, his wife. . . . He rarely dreamed of this: he was chaste both in body and soul;—but the pure image which rose up in his imagination at such times was evoked under another form,—the form of his dead mother, whom he barely remembered, though he cherished her portrait like a sacred treasure. That portrait had been painted in water-colours, in a rather inartistic manner, by a friendly neighbour, but the likeness was striking,

as every one averred. The woman, the young girl, whom as yet he did not so much as venture to expect, must possess just such a tender profile, just such kind, bright eyes, just such silky hair, just such a smile, just such a clear understanding. . . .

But this was a black-visaged, swarthy creature, with coarse hair, and a moustache on her lip; she must certainly be bad-tempered, giddy. . . . "A gipsy" (Arátoff could not devise a worse expression)—what was she to him?

And in the meantime, Arátoff was unable to banish from his mind that black-visaged gipsy, whose singing and recitation and even whose personal appearance were disagreeable to him. He was perplexed, he was angry with himself. Not long before this he had read Walter Scott's romance "Saint Ronan's Well" (there was a complete edition of Walter Scott's works in the library of his father, who revered the English romance-writer as a serious, almost a learned author). The heroine of that romance is named Clara Mowbray. A poet of the '40's, Krásoff, wrote a poem about her, which wound up with the words:

"Unhappy Clara! foolish Clara!
Unhappy Clara Mowbray!"

Arátoff was acquainted with this poem also. . . . And now these words kept incessantly re-

curring to his memory. . . . "Unhappy Clara! foolish Clara! . . ." (That was why he had been so surprised when Kupfer mentioned Clara Mílitch to him.) Even Platósha noticed, not precisely a change in Yákoff's frame of mind—as a matter of fact, no change had taken place—but something wrong about his looks, in his remarks. She cautiously interrogated him about the literary morning at which he had been present;—she whispered, sighed, scrutinised him from in front, scrutinised him from the side, from behind—and suddenly, slapping her hands on her thighs, she exclaimed:

"Well, Yásha!—I see what the trouble is!"

"What dost thou mean?" queried Arátoff in his turn.

"Thou hast certainly met at that morning some one of those tail-draggers" (that was what Platonída Ivánovna called all ladies who wore fashionable gowns). . . . "She has a comely face—and she puts on airs like *this*,—and twists her face like *this*" (Platósha depicted all this in her face), "and she makes her eyes go round like this . . . " (she mimicked this also, describing huge circles in the air with her forefinger). . . . "And it made an impression on thee, because thou art not used to it. . . . But that does not signify anything, Yásha . . . . it does not signify a-any-thing! Drink a cup of herb-tea when thou goest to bed, and that will be the end of it! . . . . Lord, help!"

Platósha ceased speaking and took herself off. . . . She probably had never made such a long and animated speech before since she was born . . . . but Arátoff thought:

"I do believe my aunt is right. . . . It is all because I am not used to such things. . . ." (He really had attracted the attention of the female sex to himself for the first time . . . . at any rate, he had never noticed it before.) "I must not indulge myself."

So he set to work at his books, and drank some linden-flower tea when he went to bed, and even slept well all that night, and had no dreams. On the following morning he busied himself with his photography, as though nothing had happened. . . .

But toward evening his spiritual serenity was again disturbed.

## VI

To wit: a messenger brought him a note, written in a large, irregular feminine hand, which ran as follows:

"If you guess who is writing to you, and if it does not bore you, come to-morrow, after dinner, to the Tver boulevard—about five o'clock—and wait. You will not be detained long. But it is very important. Come."

There was no signature. Arátoff instantly divined who his correspondent was, and that was

precisely what disturbed him.—"What nonsense!" he said, almost aloud. "This is too much! Of course I shall not go."—Nevertheless, he ordered the messenger to be summoned, and from him he learned merely that the letter had been handed to him on the street by a maid. Having dismissed him, Arátoff reread the letter, and flung it on the floor. . . . But after a while he picked it up and read it over again; a second time he cried: "Nonsense!" He did not throw the letter on the floor this time, however, but put it away in a drawer.

Arátoff went about his customary avocations, busying himself now with one, now with another; but his work did not make progress, was not a success. Suddenly he noticed that he was waiting for Kupfer, that he wanted to interrogate him, or even communicate something to him. . . . But Kupfer did not make his appearance. Then Arátoff got Púshkin and read Tatyána's letter and again felt convinced that that "gipsy" had not in the least grasped the meaning of the letter. But there was that jester Kupfer shouting: "A Rachel! A Viardot!" Then he went to his piano, raised the cover in an abstracted sort of way, tried to search out in his memory the melody of Tchaikóvsky's romance; but he immediately banged to the piano-lid with vexation and went to his aunt, in her own room, which was always kept very hot, and was forever redolent of mint, sage, and other

medicinal herbs, and crowded with such a multitude of rugs, étagères, little benches, cushions and various articles of softly-stuffed furniture that it was difficult for an inexperienced person to turn round in it, and breathing was oppressive. Platonída Ivánovna was sitting by the window with her knitting-needles in her hand (she was knitting a scarf for Yáshenka—the thirty-eighth, by actual count, during the course of his existence!)—and was greatly surprised. Arátoff rarely entered her room, and if he needed anything he always shouted in a shrill voice from his study: "Aunt Platósha!"—But she made him sit down and, in anticipation of his first words, pricked up her ears, as she stared at him through her round spectacles with one eye, and above them with the other. She did not inquire after his health, and did not offer him tea, for she saw that he had not come for that. Arátoff hesitated for a while . . . . then began to talk . . . . to talk about his mother, about the way she had lived with his father, and how his father had made her acquaintance. He knew all this perfectly well . . . but he wanted to talk precisely about that. Unluckily for him, Platósha did not know how to converse in the least; she made very brief replies, as though she suspected that Yásha had not come for that purpose.

"Certainly!"—she kept repeating hurriedly, as she plied her knitting-needles almost in an an-

gry way. "Every one knows that thy mother was a dove . . . . a regular dove. . . . And thy father loved her as a husband should love, faithfully and honourably, to the very grave; and he never loved any other woman,"—she added, elevating her voice and removing her spectacles.

"And was she of a timid disposition?" asked Arátoff, after a short pause.

"Certainly she was. As is fitting for the female sex. The bold ones are a recent invention."

"And were there no bold ones in your time?"

"There were such even in our day . . . . of course there were! But who were they? Some street-walker, or shameless hussy or other. She would drag her skirts about, and fling herself hither and thither at random. . . . What did she care? What anxiety had she? If a young fool came along, he fell into her hands. But steady-going people despised them. Dost thou remember ever to have beheld such in our house?"

Arátoff made no reply and returned to his study. Platonída Ivánovna gazed after him, shook her head and again donned her spectacles, again set to work on her scarf . . . . but more than once she fell into thought and dropped her knitting-needles on her knee.

And Arátoff until nightfall kept again and again beginning, with the same vexation, the same ire as before, to think about "the gipsy," the appointed tryst, to which he certainly would not

go! During the night also she worried him. He kept constantly seeing her eyes, now narrowed, now widely opened, with their importunate gaze riveted directly on him, and those impassive features with their imperious expression.

On the following morning he again kept expecting Kupfer, for some reason or other; he came near writing him a letter . . . . however, he did nothing . . . . but spent most of his time pacing to and fro in his study. Not for one instant did he even admit to himself the thought that he would go to that stupid "rendezvous" . . . . and at half-past four, after having swallowed his dinner in haste, he suddenly donned his overcoat and pulling his cap down on his brows, he stole out of the house without letting his aunt see him and wended his way to the Tver boulevard.

## VII

Arátoff found few pedestrians on the boulevard. The weather was raw and quite cold. He strove not to think of what he was doing. He forced himself to turn his attention to all the objects he came across and pretended to assure himself that he had come out to walk precisely like the other people. . . . The letter of the day before was in his side-pocket, and he was uninterruptedly conscious of its presence. He walked the

length of the boulevard a couple of times, darting keen glances at every feminine form which approached him, and his heart thumped, thumped violently. . . . He began to feel tired, and sat down on a bench. And suddenly the idea occurred to him: "Come now, what if that letter was not written by her but by some one else, by some other woman?" In point of fact, that should have made no difference to him . . . . and yet he was forced to admit to himself that he did not wish this. "It would be very stupid," he thought, "still more stupid than *that!*" A nervous restlessness began to take possession of him; he began to feel chilly, not outwardly but inwardly. Several times he drew out his watch from his waistcoat pocket, glanced at the face, put it back again,—and every time forgot how many minutes were lacking to five o'clock. It seemed to him as though every one who passed him stared at him in a peculiar manner, surveying him with a certain sneering surprise and curiosity. A wretched little dog ran up, sniffed at his legs and began to wag its tail. He flourished his arms angrily at it. He was most annoyed of all by a small boy from a factory in a bed-ticking jacket, who seated himself on the bench and first whistled, then scratched his head, dangling his legs, encased in huge, broken boots, the while, and staring at him from time to time. "His employer is certainly expecting him," thought Arátoff,

"and here he is, the lazy dog, wasting his time idling about. . . ."

But at that same moment it seemed to him as though some one had approached and taken up a stand close behind him . . . a warm current emanated thence. . . .

He glanced round. . . . It was she!

He recognised her immediately, although a thick, dark-blue veil concealed her features. He instantly sprang from the bench, and remained standing there, unable to utter a word. She also maintained silence. He felt greatly agitated . . . . but her agitation was as great as his: Arátoff could not help seeing even through the veil how deadly pale she grew. But she was the first to speak.

"Thank you," she began in a broken voice, "thank you for coming. I did not hope. . . ." She turned away slightly and walked along the boulevard. Arátoff followed her.

"Perhaps you condemn me," she went on, without turning her head.—"As a matter of fact, my action is very strange. . . . But I have heard a great deal about you . . . but no! I . . . . that was not the cause. . . . If you only knew. . . . I wanted to say so much to you, my God! . . . . But how am I to do it? . . . . How am I to do it!"

Arátoff walked by her side, but a little in the rear. He did not see her face; he saw only her

hat and a part of her veil . . . . and her long, threadbare cloak. All his vexation against her and against himself suddenly returned to him; all the absurdity, all the awkwardness of this tryst, of these explanations between utter strangers, on a public boulevard, suddenly presented itself to him.

"I have come hither at your behest," he began in his turn, "I have come, my dear madame" (her shoulders quivered softly, she turned into a side path, and he followed her), "merely for the sake of having an explanation, of learning in consequence of what strange misunderstanding you were pleased to appeal to me, a stranger to you, who . . . . who only *guessed,* as you expressed it in your letter, that it was precisely you who had written to him . . . . because he guessed that you had tried, in the course of that literary morning to show him too much . . . . too much obvious attention."

Arátoff uttered the whole of this little speech in the same resonant but firm voice in which men who are still very young answer at examinations on questions for which they are well prepared. . . . He was indignant; he was angry. . . . And that wrath had loosed his tongue which was not very fluent on ordinary occasions.

She continued to advance along the path with somewhat lagging steps. . . . Arátoff followed her as before, and as before saw only her little old

mantilla and her small hat, which was not quite new either. His vanity suffered at the thought that she must now be thinking: "All I had to do was to make a sign, and he immediately hastened to me!"

Arátoff lapsed into silence . . . . he expected that she would reply to him; but she did not utter a word.

"I am ready to listen to you," he began again, "and I shall even be very glad if I can be of service to you in any way . . . . although, I must confess, nevertheless, that I find it astonishing . . . that considering my isolated life . . . ."

But at his last words Clara suddenly turned to him and he beheld the same startled, profoundly-sorrowful visage, with the same large, bright tears in its eyes, with the same woful expression around the parted lips; and the visage was so fine thus that he involuntarily broke off short and felt within himself something akin to fright, and pity and forbearance.

"Akh, why . . . . why are you like this? . . ." she said with irresistibly sincere and upright force—and what a touching ring there was to her voice!—"Is it possible that my appeal to you can have offended you? . . . Is it possible that you have understood nothing? . . . Ah, yes! You have not understood anything, you have not understood what I said to you. God knows what you have imagined about me, you have not even

reflected what it cost me to write to you! . . . You have been anxious only on your own account, about your own dignity, your own peace! . . . But did I . . . ." (she so tightly clenched her hands which she had raised to her lips that her fingers cracked audibly) . . . . "As though I had made any demands upon you, as though explanations were requisite to begin with. . . . 'My dear madame' . . . . 'I even find it astonishing' . . . . 'If I can be of service to you' . . . . Akh, how foolish I have been!—I have been deceived in you, in your face! . . . When I saw you for the first time. . . . There . . . . There you stand. . . . And not one word do you utter! Have you really not a word to say?"

She had been imploring. . . . Her face suddenly flushed, and as suddenly assumed an evil and audacious expression.—"O Lord! how stupid this is!"—she cried suddenly, with a harsh laugh.—"How stupid our tryst is! How stupid I am! . . . . and you, too! . . . . Fie!"

She made a disdainful gesture with her hand as though sweeping him out of her path, and passing around him she ran swiftly from the boulevard and disappeared.

That gesture of the hand, that insulting laugh, that final exclamation instantly restored Arátoff to his former frame of mind and stifled in him the feeling which had risen in his soul when she turned to him with tears in her eyes. Again he waxed

wroth, and came near shouting after the retreating girl: "You may turn out a good actress, but why have you taken it into your head to play a comedy on me?"

With great strides he returned home, and although he continued to be indignant and to rage all the way thither, still, at the same time, athwart all these evil, hostile feelings there forced its way the memory of that wondrous face which he had beheld only for the twinkling of an eye. . . . He even put to himself the question: "Why did not I answer her when she demanded from me at least one word?"—"I did not have time," . . . . he thought. . . . "She did not give me a chance to utter that word . . . . And what would I have uttered?"

But he immediately shook his head and said, "An actress!"

And yet, at the same time, the vanity of the inexperienced, nervous youth, which had been wounded at first, now felt rather flattered at the passion which he had inspired. . . .

"But on the other hand," he pursued his reflections, "all that is at an end of course. . . . I must have appeared ridiculous to her." . . . .

This thought was disagreeable to him, and again he grew angry . . . . both at her . . . . and at himself. On reaching home he locked himself in his study. He did not wish to encounter Platósha. The kind old woman came to his door

a couple of times, applied her ear to the key-hole, and merely sighed and whispered her prayer. . . .

"It has begun!" she thought. . . . "And he is only five-and-twenty. . . . . Akh, it is early, early!"

## VIII

Arátoff was very much out of sorts all the following day.

"What is the matter, Yásha?" Platonída Ivánovna said to him. "Thou seemest to be tousled to-day, somehow." . . . In the old woman's peculiar language this quite accurately defined Arátoff's moral condition. He could not work, but even he himself did not know what he wanted. Now he was expecting Kupfer again (he suspected that it was precisely from Kupfer that Clara had obtained his address . . . . and who else could have "talked a great deal" about him?); again he wondered whether his acquaintance with her was to end in that way? . . . . again he imagined that she would write him another letter; again he asked himself whether he ought not to write her a letter, in which he might explain everything to her,—as he did not wish to leave an unpleasant impression of himself. . . . But, in point of fact, *what* was he to explain?—Now he aroused in himself something very like disgust for her, for her persistence, her boldness; again

that indescribably touching face presented itself to him and her irresistible voice made itself heard; and yet again he recalled her singing, her recitation—and did not know whether he was right in his wholesale condemnation.—In one word: he was a tousled man! At last he became bored with all this and decided, as the saying is, "to take it upon himself" and erase all that affair, as it undoubtedly was interfering with his avocations and disturbing his peace of mind.—He did not find it so easy to put his resolution into effect. . . . More than a week elapsed before he got back again into his ordinary rut. Fortunately, Kupfer did not present himself at all, any more than if he had not been in Moscow. Not long before the "affair" Arátoff had begun to busy himself with painting for photographic ends; he devoted himself to this with redoubled zeal.

Thus, imperceptibly, with a few "relapses" as the doctors express it, consisting, for example in the fact that he once came very near going to call on the Princess, two weeks . . . . three weeks passed . . . . and Arátoff became once more the Arátoff of old. Only deep down, under the surface of his life, something heavy and dark secretly accompanied him in all his comings and goings. Thus does a large fish which has just been hooked, but has not yet been drawn out, swim along the bottom of a deep river under the

very boat wherein sits the fisherman with his stout rod in hand.

And lo! one day as he was skimming over some not quite fresh numbers of the *Moscow News*, Arátoff hit upon the following correspondence:

"With great sorrow," wrote a certain local literary man from Kazán, "we insert in our theatrical chronicle the news of the sudden death of our gifted actress, Clara Mílitch, who had succeeded in the brief space of her engagement in becoming the favourite of our discriminating public. Our sorrow is all the greater because Miss Mílitch herself put an end to her young life, which held so much of promise, by means of poison. And this poisoning is all the more dreadful because the actress took the poison on the stage itself! They barely got her home, where, to universal regret, she died. Rumours are current in the town to the effect that unrequited love led her to that terrible deed."

Arátoff softly laid the newspaper on the table. To all appearances he remained perfectly composed . . . . but something smote him simultaneously in his breast and in his head, and then slowly diffused itself through all his members. He rose to his feet, stood for a while on one spot, and again seated himself, and again perused the letter. Then he rose once more, lay down on his bed and placing his hands under his head, he stared for a long time at the wall like one dazed.

Little by little that wall seemed to recede . . . . to vanish . . . . and he beheld before him the boulevard beneath grey skies and *her* in her black mantilla . . . . then her again on the platform . . . . he even beheld himself by her side.—That which had smitten him so forcibly in the breast at the first moment, now began to rise up . . . . to rise up in his throat. . . . . He tried to cough, to call some one, but his voice failed him, and to his own amazement, tears which he could not restrain gushed from his eyes. . . . What had evoked those tears? Pity? Regret? Or was it simply that his nerves had been unable to withstand the sudden shock? Surely, she was nothing to him? Was not that the fact?

"But perhaps that is not true," the thought suddenly occurred to him. "I must find out! But from whom? From the Princess?—No, from Kupfer . . . . from Kupfer? But they say he is not in Moscow.—Never mind! I must apply to him first!"

With these ideas in his head Arátoff hastily dressed himself, summoned a cab and dashed off to Kupfer.

## IX

He had not hoped to find him . . . . but he did. Kupfer actually had been absent from Moscow for a time, but had returned about a week pre-

viously and was even preparing to call on Arátoff again. He welcomed him with his customary cordiality, and began to explain something to him . . . but Arátoff immediately interrupted him with the impatient question:

"Hast thou read it?—Is it true?"

"Is what true?" replied the astounded Kupfer.

"About Clara Mílitch?"

Kupfer's face expressed compassion.—"Yes, yes, brother, it is true; she has poisoned herself. It is such a misfortune!"

Arátoff held his peace for a space.—"But hast thou also read it in the newspaper?" he asked:—"Or perhaps thou hast been to Kazán thyself?"

"I have been to Kazán, in fact; the Princess and I conducted her thither. She went on the stage there, and had great success. Only I did not remain there until the catastrophe. . . . I was in Yaroslávl."

"In Yaroslávl?"

"Yes; I escorted the Princess thither. . . . She has settled in Yaroslávl now."

"But hast thou trustworthy information?"

"The most trustworthy sort . . . . at first hand! I made acquaintance in Kazán with her family.—But stay, my dear fellow . . . . this news seems to agitate thee greatly.—But I remember that Clara did not please thee that time! Thou wert wrong! She was a splendid girl—

only her head! She had an ungovernable head! I was greatly distressed about her!"

Arátoff did not utter a word, but dropped down on a chair, and after waiting a while he asked Kupfer to tell him . . . . he hesitated.

"What?" asked Kupfer.

"Why . . . . everything," replied Arátoff slowly.—"About her family, for instance . . . . and so forth. Everything thou knowest!"

"But does that interest thee?—Certainly!"

Kupfer, from whose face it was impossible to discern that he had grieved so greatly over Clara, began his tale.

From his words Arátoff learned that Clara Mílitch's real name had been Katerína Milovídoff; that her father, now dead, had been an official teacher of drawing in Kazán, had painted bad portraits and official images, and moreover had borne the reputation of being a drunkard and a domestic tyrant . . . "and a *cultured* man into the bargain!" . . . . (Here Kupfer laughed in a self-satisfied manner, by way of hinting at the pun he had made);[1]—that he had left at his death, in the first place, a widow of the merchant class, a thoroughly stupid female, straight out of one of Ostróvsky's comedies;[2] and in the second place,

[1] An image, or holy picture, is *óbraz;* the adjective "cultured" is derived from the same word in its sense of pattern, model—*obrazóvanny.*—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Ostróvsky's comedies of life in the merchant class are irresistibly amusing, talented, and true to nature.—TRANSLATOR.

a daughter much older than Clara and bearing no resemblance to her—a very clever girl and "greatly developed, my dear fellow!" That the two—widow and daughter—lived in easy circumstances, in a decent little house which had been acquired by the sale of those wretched portraits and holy pictures; that Clara . . . . or Kátya, whichever you choose to call her, had astonished every one ever since her childhood by her talent, but was of an insubordinate, capricious disposition, and was constantly quarrelling with her father; that having an inborn passion for the theatre, she had run away from the parental house at the age of sixteen with an actress. . . .

"With an actor?" interjected Arátoff.

"No, not with an actor, but an actress; to whom she had become attached. . . . This actress had a protector, it is true, a wealthy gentleman already elderly, who only refrained from marrying her because he was already married—while the actress, it appeared, was married also."

Further, Kupfer informed Arátoff that, prior to her arrival in Moscow, Clara had acted and sung in provincial theatres; that on losing her friend the actress (the gentleman had died also, it seems, or had made it up with his wife—precisely which Kupfer did not quite remember . . . .), she had made the acquaintance of the Princess, "that woman of gold, whom thou, my friend Yákoff Andréitch," the narrator added with feeling,

"wert not able to appreciate at her true worth"; that finally Clara had been offered an engagement in Kazán, and had accepted it, although she had previously declared that she would never leave Moscow!—But how the people of Kazán had loved her—it was fairly amazing! At every representation she received bouquets and gifts! bouquets and gifts!—A flour merchant, the greatest bigwig in the government, had even presented her with a golden inkstand!—Kupfer narrated all this with great animation, but without, however, displaying any special sentimentality, and interrupting his speech with the question:—"Why dost thou want to know that?" . . . . or "To what end is that?" when Arátoff, after listening to him with devouring attention, demanded more and still more details. Everything was said at last, and Kupfer ceased speaking, rewarding himself for his toil with a cigar.

"But why did she poison herself?" asked Arátoff. "The newspaper stated. . . ."

Kupfer waved his hands.—"Well. . . . That I cannot say. . . . I don't know. But the newspaper lies. Clara behaved in an exemplary manner . . . . she had no love-affairs. . . . And how could she, with her pride! She was as proud as Satan himself, and inaccessible! An insubordinate head! Firm as a rock! If thou wilt believe me,—I knew her pretty intimately, seest thou,—I never beheld a tear in her eyes!"

"But I did," thought Arátoff to himself.

"Only there is this to be said," went on Kupfer:—"I noticed a great change in her of late: she became so depressed, she would remain silent for hours at a time; you could n't get a word out of her. I once asked her: 'Has any one offended you, Katerína Semyónovna?' Because I knew her disposition: she could not endure an insult. She held her peace, and that was the end of it! Even her success on the stage did not cheer her up; they would shower her with bouquets . . . and she would not smile! She gave one glance at the gold inkstand,—and put it aside!—She complained that no one would write her a genuine part, as she conceived it. And she gave up singing entirely. I am to blame, brother! . . . I repeated to her that thou didst not think she had any *school*. But nevertheless . . . . why she poisoned herself is incomprehensible! And the way she did it too. . . ."

"In what part did she have the greatest success?" . . . Arátoff wanted to find out what part she had played that last time, but for some reason or other he asked something else.

"In Ostróvsky's 'Grúnya'[1] I believe. But I repeat to thee: she had no love-affairs! Judge for thyself by one thing: she lived in her mother's house. . . . Thou knowest what some of those

[1] Turgénieff probably means Grúsha (another form for the diminutive of Agrippína, in Russian Agrafénya). The play is "Live as You Can."—TRANSLATOR.

merchants' houses are like; a glass case filled with holy images in every corner and a shrine lamp in front of the case; deadly, stifling heat; a sour odour; in the drawing-room nothing but chairs ranged along the wall, and geraniums in the windows;—and when a visitor arrives, the hostess begins to groan as though an enemy were approaching. What chance is there for love-making, and amours in such a place? Sometimes it happened that they would not even admit me. Their maid-servant, a robust peasant-woman, in a Turkey red cotton sarafan,[1] and pendulous breasts, would place herself across the path in the anteroom and roar: 'Whither away?' No, I positively cannot understand what made her poison herself. She must have grown tired of life," Kupfer philosophically wound up his remarks.

Arátoff sat with drooping head.—"Canst thou give me the address of that house in Kazán?" he said at last.

"I can; but what dost thou want of it?—Dost thou wish to send a letter thither?"

"Perhaps so."

"Well, as thou wilt. Only the old woman will not answer thee. Her sister might . . . . . the clever sister!—But again, brother, I marvel at thee! Such indifference formerly . . . . and

[1] A full gown gathered into a narrow band just under the armpits and suspended over the shoulders by straps of the same.—TRANSLATOR.

now so much attention! All that comes of living a solitary life, my dear fellow!"

Arátoff made no reply to this remark and went away, after having procured the address in Kazán.

Agitation, surprise, expectation had been depicted on his face when he went to Kupfer. . . . Now he advanced with an even gait, downcast eyes, and hat pulled low down over his brows; almost every one he met followed him with a searching gaze . . . . but he paid no heed to the passers-by . . . it was quite different from what it had been on the boulevard! . . .

"Unhappy Clara! Foolish Clara!" resounded in his soul.

## X

NEVERTHELESS, Arátoff passed the following day in a fairly tranquil manner. He was even able to devote himself to his customary occupations. There was only one thing: both during his busy time and in his leisure moments he thought incessantly of Clara, of what Kupfer had told him the day before. Truth to tell, his thoughts were also of a decidedly pacific nature. It seemed to him that that strange young girl interested him from a psychological point of view, as something in the nature of a puzzle, over whose solution it was worth while to cudgel one's brains.—"She ran away from home with a kept actress," he

thought, "she placed herself under the protection of that Princess, in whose house she lived,—and had no love-affairs? It is improbable! . . . Kupfer says it was pride! But, in the first place, we know" (Arátoff should have said: "we have read in books") . . . . "that pride is compatible with light-minded conduct; and in the second place, did not she, such a proud person, appoint a meeting with a man who might show her scorn . . . . and appoint it in a public place, into the bargain . . . . on the boulevard!"—At this point there recurred to Arátoff's mind the whole scene on the boulevard, and he asked himself: "Had he really shown scorn for Clara?"—"No," he decided. . . . That was another feeling . . . . a feeling of perplexity . . . . of distrust, in short!"—"Unhappy Clara!" again rang through his brain.—"Yes, she was unhappy," he decided again . . . . that was the most fitting word.

"But if that is so, I was unjust. She spoke truly when she said that I did not understand her. 'T is a pity!—It may be that a very remarkable being has passed so close to me . . . . and I did not take advantage of the opportunity, but repulsed her. . . . Well, never mind! My life is still before me. I shall probably have other encounters of a different sort!

"But what prompted her to pick out *me,* in particular?"—He cast a glance at a mirror

which he was passing at the moment. "What is there peculiar about me? And what sort of a beauty am I?—My face is like everybody else's face. . . . However, she was not a beauty either.

"She was not a beauty . . . . but what an expressive face she had! Impassive . . . but expressive! I have never before seen such a face.—And she has talent . . . . that is to say, she had talent, undoubted talent. Wild, untrained, even coarse . . . . but undoubted.—And in that case also I was unjust to her."—Arátoff mentally transported himself to the musical morning . . . and noticed that he remembered with remarkable distinctness every word she had sung or recited, every intonation. . . . That would not have been the case had she been devoid of talent.

"And now all that is in the grave, where she has thrust herself. . . . But I have nothing to do with that. . . . I am not to blame! It would even be absurd to think that I am to blame."—Again it flashed into Arátoff's mind that even had she had "anything of that sort" about her, his conduct during the interview would indubitably have disenchanted her. That was why she had broken into such harsh laughter at parting.—And where was the proof that she had poisoned herself on account of an unhappy love? It is only newspaper correspondents who attribute every such death to unhappy love!—But life easily becomes repulsive to people with char-

acter, like Clara . . . . and tiresome. Yes, tiresome. Kupfer was right: living simply bored her.

"In spite of her success, of her ovations?"—Arátoff meditated.—The psychological analysis to which he surrendered himself was even agreeable to him. Unaccustomed as he had been, up to this time, to all contact with women, he did not suspect how significant for him was this tense examination of a woman's soul.

"Consequently," he pursued his meditations, "art did not satisfy her, did not fill the void of her life. Genuine artists exist only for art, for the theatre. . . . Everything else pales before that which they regard as their vocation. . . . She was a dilettante!"

Here Arátoff again became thoughtful.—No, the word "dilettante" did not consort with that face, with the expression of that face, of those eyes . . . .

And again there rose up before him the image of Clara with her tear-filled eyes riveted upon him, and her clenched hands raised to her lips. . . .

"Akh, I won't think of it, I won't think of it . . . ." he whispered. . . . "What is the use?"

In this manner the whole day passed. During dinner Arátoff chatted a great deal with Platósha, questioned her about old times, which, by the way, she recalled and transmitted badly, as she was not possessed of a very glib tongue, and

had noticed hardly anything in the course of her life save her Yáshka. She merely rejoiced that he was so good-natured and affectionate that day! —Toward evening Arátoff quieted down to such a degree that he played several games of trumps with his aunt.

Thus passed the day . . . . but the night was quite another matter!

## XI

It began well; he promptly fell asleep, and when his aunt entered his room on tiptoe for the purpose of making the sign of the cross over him thrice as he slept—she did this every night—he was lying and breathing as quietly as a child.— But before daybreak he had a vision.

He dreamed that he was walking over the bare steppes, sown with stones, beneath a low-hanging sky. Between the stones wound a path; he was advancing along it.

Suddenly there rose up in front of him something in the nature of a delicate cloud. He looked intently at it; the little cloud turned into a woman in a white gown, with a bright girdle about her waist. She was hurrying away from him. He did not see either her face or her hair .... a long piece of tissue concealed them. But he felt bound to overtake her and look into her eyes. Only, no matter how much haste he made, she still walked more quickly than he.

On the path lay a broad, flat stone, resembling a tomb-stone. It barred her way. The woman came to a halt. Arátoff ran up to her. She turned toward him—but still he could not see her eyes . . . . they were closed. Her face was white,—white as snow; her arms hung motionless. She resembled a statue.

Slowly, without bending a single limb, she leaned backward and sank down on that stone. . . . And now Arátoff was lying beside her, outstretched like a mortuary statue,—and his hands were folded like those of a corpse.

But at this point the woman suddenly rose to her feet and went away. Arátoff tried to rise also . . . . but he could not stir, he could not unclasp his hands, and could only gaze after her in despair.

Then the woman suddenly turned round, and he beheld bright, vivacious eyes in a living face, which was strange to him, however. She was laughing, beckoning to him with her hand . . . . and still he was unable to move.

She laughed yet once again, and swiftly retreated, merrily nodding her head, on which a garland of tiny roses gleamed crimson.

Arátoff strove to shout, strove to break that frightful nightmare. . . . Suddenly everything grew dark round about . . . . and the woman returned to him.

But she was no longer a statue whom he knew not . . . she was Clara. She halted in front of

him, folded her arms, and gazed sternly and attentively at him. Her lips were tightly compressed, but it seemed to Arátoff that he heard the words:

"If thou wishest to know who I am, go thither!"

"Whither?" he asked.

"Thither!"—the moaning answer made itself audible.—"Thither!"

Arátoff awoke.

He sat up in bed, lighted a candle which stood on his night-stand, but did not rise, and sat there for a long time slowly gazing about him. It seemed to him that something had taken place within him since he went to bed; that something had taken root within him . . . . something had taken possession of him. "But can that be possible?" he whispered unconsciously. "Can it be that such a power exists?"

He could not remain in bed. He softly dressed himself and paced his chamber until daylight. And strange to say! He did not think about Clara for a single minute,—and he did not think about her because he had made up his mind to set off for Kazán that very day!

He thought only of that journey, of how it was to be made, and what he ought to take with him, —and how he would there ferret out and find out everything,—and regain his composure.

"If thou dost not go," he argued with himself,

"thou wilt surely lose thy reason!" He was afraid of that; he was afraid of his nerves. He was convinced that as soon as he should see all that with his own eyes, all obsessions would flee like a nocturnal nightmare.—"And the journey will occupy not more than a week in all," he thought. . . . "What is a week? And there is no other way of ridding myself of it."

The rising sun illuminated his room; but the light of day did not disperse the shades of night which weighed upon him, did not alter his decision.

Platósha came near having an apoplectic stroke when he communicated his decision to her. She even squatted down on her heels . . . . her legs gave way under her. "To Kazán? Why to Kazán?" she whispered, protruding her eyes which were already blind enough without that. She would not have been any more astounded had she learned that her Yásha was going to marry the neighbouring baker's daughter, or depart to America.—"And shalt thou stay long in Kazan?"

"I shall return at the end of a week," replied Arátoff, as he stood half-turned away from his aunt, who was still sitting on the floor.

Platósha tried to remonstrate again, but Arátoff shouted at her in an utterly unexpected and unusual manner:

"I am not a baby," he yelled, turning pale all over, while his lips quivered and his eyes flashed

viciously.—"I am six-and-twenty years of age. I know what I am about,—I am free to do as I please!—I will not permit any one. . . . Give me money for the journey; prepare a trunk with linen and clothing . . . . and do not bother me! I shall return at the end of a week, Platósha," he added, in a softer tone.

Platósha rose to her feet, grunting, and, making no further opposition, wended her way to her chamber. Yásha had frightened her.—"I have not a head on my shoulders," she remarked to the cook, who was helping her to pack Yásha's things, —"not a head—but a bee-hive . . . . and what bees are buzzing there I do not know! He is going away to Kazán, my mother, to Ka-zá-án!"

The cook, who had noticed their yard-porter talking for a long time to the policeman about something, wanted to report this circumstance to her mistress, but she did not dare, and merely thought to herself: "To Kazán? If only it is n't some place further away!"—And Platonída Ivánovna was so distracted that she did not even utter her customary prayer.—In such a catastrophe as this even the Lord God could be of no assistance!

That same day Arátoff set off for Kazán.

## XII

No sooner had he arrived in that town and engaged a room at the hotel, than he dashed off in search of the widow Milovídoff's house. During the whole course of his journey he had been in a sort of stupor, which, nevertheless, did not in the least prevent his taking all proper measures, —transferring himself at Nizhni Nóvgorod from the railway to the steamer, eating at the stations, and so forth. As before, he was convinced that everything would be cleared up *there,* and accordingly he banished from his thoughts all memories and speculations, contenting himself with one thing,—the mental preparation of the speech in which he was to set forth to Clara Mílitch's family the real reason of his trip.—And now, at last, he had attained to the goal of his yearning, and ordered the servant to announce him. He was admitted—with surprise and alarm—but he was admitted.

The widow Milovídoff's house proved to be in fact just as Kupfer had described it; and the widow herself really did resemble one of Ostróvsky's women of the merchant class, although she was of official rank; her husband had been a Collegiate Assessor.[1] Not without some difficulty

[1] The eighth from the top in the Table of Ranks won by service to the state, which Peter the Great instituted. A sufficiently high grade in that table confers hereditary nobility; the lower grades carry only personal nobility.—TRANSLATOR.

did Arátoff, after having preliminarily excused himself for his boldness, and the strangeness of his visit, make the speech which he had prepared, to the effect that he wished to collect all the necessary information concerning the gifted actress who had perished at such an early age; that he was actuated not by idle curiosity, but by a profound sympathy for her talent, of which he was a worshipper (he said exactly that—"a worshipper"); that, in conclusion, it would be a sin to leave the public in ignorance of the loss it had sustained,—and why its hopes had not been realized!

Madame Milovídoff did not interrupt Arátoff; it is hardly probable that she understood very clearly what this strange visitor was saying to her, and she merely swelled a little with pride, and opened her eyes widely at him on perceiving that he had a peaceable aspect, and was decently clad, and was not some sort of swindler . . . . and was not asking for any money.

"Are you saying that about Kátya?" she asked, as soon as Arátoff ceased speaking.

"Exactly so . . . . about your daughter."

"And you have come from Moscow for that purpose?"

"Yes, from Moscow."

"Merely for that?"

"Merely for that."

Madame Milovídoff suddenly took fright.—

"Why, you—are an author? Do you write in the newspapers?"

"No, I am not an author,—and up to the present time, I have never written for the newspapers."

The widow bent her head. She was perplexed.

"Consequently . . . . it is for your own pleasure?" she suddenly inquired. Arátoff did not immediately hit upon the proper answer.

"Out of sympathy, out of reverence for talent," he said at last.

The word "reverence" pleased Madame Milovídoff. "Very well!" she ejaculated with a sigh. . . . "Although I am her mother, and grieved very greatly over her. . . . It was such a catastrophe, you know! . . . . Still, I must say, that she was always a crazy sort of girl, and ended up in the same way! Such a disgrace. . . . Judge for yourself: what sort of a thing is that for a mother? We may be thankful that they even buried her in Christian fashion. . . . " Madame Milovídoff crossed herself.—"From the time she was a small child she submitted to no one,—she abandoned the paternal roof . . . . and finally, it is enough to say that she became an actress! Every one knows that I did not turn her out of the house; for I loved her! For I am her mother, all the same! She did not have to live with strangers,—and beg alms! . . . " Here the widow melted into tears.—"But if you, sir," she began

afresh, wiping her eyes with the ends of her kerchief, "really have that intention, and if you will not concoct anything dishonourable about us,—but if, on the contrary, you wish to show us a favour,—then you had better talk with my other daughter. She will tell you everything better than I can. . . . "Ánnotchka!" called Madame Milovídoff:—"Ánnotchka, come hither! There's some gentleman or other from Moscow who wants to talk about Kátya!"

There was a crash in the adjoining room, but no one appeared.—"Ánnotchka!" cried the widow again—"Anna Semyónovna! come hither, I tell thee!"

The door opened softly and on the threshold appeared a girl no longer young, of sickly aspect, and homely, but with very gentle and sorrowful eyes. Arátoff rose from his seat to greet her, and introduced himself, at the same time mentioning his friend Kupfer.—"Ah! Feódor Feódoritch!" ejaculated the girl softly, as she softly sank down on a chair.

"Come, now, talk with the gentleman," said Madame Milovídoff, rising ponderously from her seat: "He has taken the trouble to come expressly from Moscow,—he wishes to collect information about Kátya. But you must excuse me, sir," she added, turning to Arátoff. . . . "I shall go away, to attend to domestic affairs. You can have a good explanation with Ánnotchka—

she will tell you about the theatre . . . . and all that sort of thing. She's my clever, well-educated girl: she speaks French and reads books quite equal to her dead sister. And she educated her sister, I may say. . . . She was the elder—well, and so she taught her."

Madame Milovídoff withdrew. When Arátoff was left alone with Anna Semyónovna he repeated his speech; but from the first glance he understood that he had to deal with a girl who really was cultured, not with a merchant's daughter,—and so he enlarged somewhat, and employed different expressions;—and toward the end he became agitated, flushed, and felt conscious that his heart was beating hard. Anna Semyónovna listened to him in silence, with her hands folded; the sad smile did not leave her face . . . . bitter woe which had not ceased to cause pain, was expressed in that smile.

"Did you know my sister?" she asked Arátoff.

"No; properly speaking, I did not know her," he replied. "I saw and heard your sister once . . . . but all that was needed was to hear and see your sister once, in order to . . . ."

"Do you mean to write her biography?" Anna put another question.

Arátoff had not expected that word; nevertheless, he immediately answered "Why not?" But the chief point was that he wished to acquaint the public . . . .

Anna stopped him with a gesture of her hand. "To what end? The public caused her much grief without that; and Kátya had only just begun to live. But if you yourself" (Anna looked at him and again smiled that same sad smile, only now it was more cordial . . . . apparently she was thinking: "Yes, thou dost inspire me with confidence") . . . . "if you yourself cherish such sympathy for her, then permit me to request that you come to us this evening . . . . after dinner. I cannot now . . . . so suddenly. . . . I will collect my forces. . . . I will make an effort. . . . . Akh, I loved her too greatly!"

Anna turned away; she was on the point of bursting into sobs.

Arátoff rose alertly from his chair, thanked her for her proposal, said that he would come without fail . . . . without fail! and went away, bearing in his soul an impression of a quiet voice, of gentle and sorrowful eyes—and burning with the languor of anticipation.

## XIII

Arátoff returned to the Milovídoffs' house that same day, and conversed for three whole hours with Anna Semyónovna. Madame Milovídoff went to bed immediately after dinner—at two o'clock—and "rested" until evening tea, at seven o'clock. Arátoff's conversation with Clara's sis-

ter was not, properly speaking, a conversation: she did almost the whole of the talking, at first with hesitation, with confusion, but afterward with uncontrollable fervour. She had, evidently, idolised her sister. The confidence wherewith Arátoff had inspired her waxed and strengthened; she was no longer embarrassed; she even fell to weeping softly, twice, in his presence. He seemed to her worthy of her frank revelations and effusions. Nothing of that sort had ever before come into her own dull life! . . . And he . . . . he drank in her every word.

This, then, is what he learned . . . . much of it, as a matter of course, from what she refrained from saying . . . . and much he filled out for himself.

In her youth Clara had been, without doubt, a disagreeable child; and as a young girl she had been only a little softer: self-willed, hot-tempered, vain, she had not got on particularly well with her father, whom she despised for his drunkenness and incapacity. He was conscious of this and did not pardon it in her. Her musical faculties showed themselves at an early age; her father repressed them, recognising painting as the sole art,—wherein he himself had had so little success, but which had nourished him and his family. Clara had loved her mother . . . in a careless way, as she would have loved a nurse; she worshipped her sister, although she squabbled with her, and bit her. . . . It is true that afterward

she had been wont to go down on her knees before her and kiss the bitten places. She was all fire, all passion, and all contradiction: vengeful and kind-hearted, magnanimous and rancorous; "she believed in Fate, and did not believe in God" (these words Anna whispered with terror); she loved everything that was beautiful, and dressed herself at haphazard; she could not endure to have young men pay court to her, but in books she read only those pages where love was the theme; she did not care to please, she did not like petting and never forgot caresses as she never forgot offences; she was afraid of death, and she had killed herself! She had been wont to say sometimes, "I do not meet the sort of man I want —and the others I will not have!"—"Well, and what if you should meet the right sort?" Anna had asked her.—"If I do . . . . I shall take him."—"But what if he will not give himself?" —"Well, then . . . . I will make an end of myself. It will mean that I am good for nothing."

Clara's father . . . . . (he sometimes asked his wife when he was drunk: "Who was the father of that black-visaged little devil of thine?—I was not!")—Clara's father, in the endeavour to get her off his hands as promptly as possible, undertook to betroth her to a wealthy young merchant, a very stupid fellow,—one of the "cultured" sort. Two weeks before the wedding (she

was only sixteen years of age), she walked up to her betrothed, folded her arms, and drumming with her fingers on her elbows (her favourite pose), she suddenly dealt him a blow, bang! on his rosy cheek with her big, strong hand! He sprang to his feet, and merely gasped,—it must be stated that he was dead in love with her. . . . He asked: "What is that for?" She laughed and left the room.—"I was present in the room," narrated Anna, "and was a witness. I ran after her and said to her: 'Good gracious, Kátya, why didst thou do that?'—But she answered me: 'If he were a real man he would have thrashed me, but as it is, he is a wet hen! And he asks what it is for, to boot. If he loved me and did not avenge himself, then let him bear it and not ask: "what is that for?" He 'll never get anything of me, unto ages of ages!' And so she did not marry him. Soon afterward she made the acquaintance of that actress, and left our house. My mother wept, but my father only said: 'Away with the refractory goat from the flock!' and would take no trouble, or try to hunt her up. Father did not understand Clara. On the eve of her flight," added Anna, "she almost strangled me in her embrace, and kept repeating: 'I cannot! I cannot do otherwise! . . . . My heart may break in two, but I cannot! our cage is too small . . . . it is not large enough for my wings! And one cannot escape his fate'" . . . .

"After that," remarked Anna, "we rarely saw each other. . . . When father died she came to us for a couple of days, took nothing from the inheritance, and again disappeared. She found it oppressive with us. . . . I saw that. Then she returned to Kazán as an actress."

Arátoff began to interrogate Anna concerning the theatre, the parts in which Clara had appeared, her success. . . . Anna answered in detail, but with the same sad, although animated enthusiasm. She even showed Arátoff a photographic portrait, which represented Clara in the costume of one of her parts. In the portrait she was looking to one side, as though turning away from the spectators; the ribbon intertwined with her thick hair fell like a serpent on her bare arm. Arátoff gazed long at that portrait, thought it a good likeness, inquired whether Clara had not taken part in public readings, and learned that she had not; that she required the excitement of the theatre, of the stage . . . . but another question was burning on his lips.

"Anna Semyónovna!" he exclaimed at last, not loudly, but with peculiar force, "tell me, I entreat you, why she . . . . why she made up her mind to that frightful step?"

Anna dropped her eyes.—"I do not know!" she said, after the lapse of several minutes.—"God is my witness, I do not know!" she continued impetuously, perceiving that Arátoff had

flung his hands apart as though he did not believe her. . . . "From the very time she arrived here she seemed to be thoughtful, gloomy. Something must infallibly have happened to her in Moscow, which I was not able to divine! But, on the contrary, on that fatal day, she seemed . . . . if not more cheerful, at any rate more tranquil than usual. I did not even have any forebodings," added Anna with a bitter smile, as though reproaching herself for that.

"You see," she began again, "it seemed to have been written in Kátya's fate, that she should be unhappy. She was convinced of it herself from her early youth. She would prop her head on her hand, meditate, and say: 'I shall not live long!' She had forebodings. Just imagine, she even saw beforehand,—sometimes in a dream, sometimes in ordinary wise,—what was going to happen to her! 'I cannot live as I wish, so I will not live at all,' . . . . was her adage.—'Our life is in our own hands, you know!' And she proved it."

Anna covered her face with her hands and ceased speaking.

"Anna Semyónovna," began Arátoff, after waiting a little: "perhaps you have heard to what the newspapers attributed . . . ."

"To unhappy love?" interrupted Anna, removing her hands from her face with a jerk. "That is a calumny, a calumny, a lie! . . . My

unsullied, unapproachable Kátya . . . . Kátya! . . . . and an unhappy, rejected love? And would not I have known about that? . . . Everybody, everybody fell in love with her . . . . but she. . . . And whom could she have fallen in love with here? Who, out of all these men, was worthy of her? Who had attained to that ideal of honour, uprightness, purity,—most of all, purity,—which she constantly held before her, in spite of all her defects? . . . . Reject her . . . her . . . ."

Anna's voice broke. . . . Her fingers trembled slightly. Suddenly she flushed scarlet all over . . . . flushed with indignation, and at that moment—and only at that moment—did she resemble her sister.

Arátoff attempted to apologise.

"Listen," broke in Anna once more:—"I insist upon it that you shall not believe that calumny yourself, and that you shall dissipate it, if possible! Here, you wish to write an article about her, or something of that sort:—here is an opportunity for you to defend her memory! That is why I am talking so frankly with you. Listen: Kátya left a diary. . . ."

Arátoff started.—"A diary," he whispered.

"Yes, a diary . . . . that is to say, a few pages only.—Kátya was not fond of writing . . . . for whole months together she did not write at all . . . . and her letters were so short! But she

was always, always truthful, she never lied. . . . Lie, forsooth, with her vanity! I . . . . I will show you that diary! You shall see for yourself whether it contains a single hint of any such unhappy love!"

Anna hastily drew from the table-drawer a thin copy-book, about ten pages in length, no more, and offered it to Arátoff. The latter grasped it eagerly, recognised the irregular, bold handwriting,—the handwriting of that anonymous letter,—opened it at random, and began at the following lines:

"Moscow—Tuesday . . . . June. I sang and recited at a literary morning. To-day is a significant day for me. *It must decide my fate.*" (These words were doubly underlined.) "Once more I have seen . . . ." Here followed several lines which had been carefully blotted out. —And then: "No! no! no! . . . . I must return to my former idea, if only . . . ."

Arátoff dropped the hand in which he held the book, and his head sank quietly on his breast.

"Read!" cried Anna.—"Why don't you read? Read from the beginning. . . . You can read the whole of it in five minutes, though this diary extends over two whole years. In Kazán she wrote nothing. . . ."

Arátoff slowly rose from his chair, and fairly crashed down on his knees before Anna!

She was simply petrified with amazement and terror.

"Give . . . . give me this diary," said Arátoff in a fainting voice.—"Give it to me . . . . and the photograph . . . . you must certainly have another—but I will return the diary to you. . . . But I must, I must . . . . ."

In his entreaty, in the distorted features of his face there was something so despairing that it even resembled wrath, suffering. . . . And in reality he was suffering. It seemed as though he had not been able to foresee that such a calamity would descend upon him, and was excitedly begging to be spared, to be saved. . . .

"Give it to me," he repeated.

"But . . . . you . . . . you were not in love with my sister?" said Anna at last.

Arátoff continued to kneel.

"I saw her twice in all . . . . believe me! . . . and if I had not been impelled by causes which I myself cannot clearly either understand or explain . . . . if some power that is stronger than I were not upon me . . . . I would not have asked you. . . . I would not have come hither . . . I must . . . . I ought . . . . why, you said yourself that I was bound to restore her image!"

"And you were not in love with my sister?" asked Anna for the second time.

Arátoff did not reply at once, and turned away slightly, as though with pain.

"Well, yes! I was! I was!—And I am in love with her now . . . . " he exclaimed with the same desperation as before.

Footsteps became audible in the adjoining room.

"Rise . . . . rise . . . . " said Anna hastily. "My mother is coming."

Arátoff rose.

"And take the diary and the picture. God be with you!—Poor, poor Kátya! . . . But you must return the diary to me," she added with animation.—"And if you write anything, you must be sure to send it to me. . . . Do you hear?"

The appearance of Madame Milovídoff released Arátoff from the necessity of replying.—He succeeded, nevertheless, in whispering:—"You are an angel! Thanks! I will send all that I write. . . . ."

Madame Milovídoff was too drowsy to divine anything. And so Arátoff left Kazán with the photographic portrait in the side-pocket of his coat. He had returned the copy-book to Anna, but without her having detected it, he had cut out the page on which stood the underlined words.

On his way back to Moscow he was again seized with a sort of stupor. Although he secretly rejoiced that he had got what he went for, yet he repelled all thoughts of Clara until he should

reach home again. He meditated a great deal more about her sister Anna.—"Here now," he said to himself, "is a wonderful, sympathetic being! What a delicate comprehension of everything, what a loving heart, what absence of egoism! And how comes it that such girls bloom with us, and in the provinces,—and in such surroundings into the bargain! She is both sickly, and ill-favoured, and not young,—but what a capital wife she would make for an honest, well-educated man! That is the person with whom one ought to fall in love! . . ." Arátoff meditated thus . . . . but on his arrival in Moscow the matter took quite another turn.

## XIV

Platonída Ivánovna was unspeakably delighted at the return of her nephew. She had thought all sorts of things during his absence!—"At the very least he has gone to Siberia!" she whispered, as she sat motionless in her little chamber: "for a year at the very least!"—Moreover the cook had frightened her by imparting the most authentic news concerning the disappearance of first one, then another young man from the neighbourhood. Yásha's complete innocence and trustworthiness did not in the least serve to calm the old woman.—"Because . . . . much that signifies!—he busies himself with photog-

raphy . . . . well, and that is enough! Seize him!" And now here was her Yáshenka come back to her safe and sound! She did notice, it is true, that he appeared to have grown thin, and his face seemed to be sunken—that was comprehensible . . . . he had had no one to look after him. But she did not dare to question him concerning his trip. At dinner she inquired:

"And is Kazán a nice town?"

"Yes," replied Arátoff.

"Tatárs live there, I believe?"

"Not Tatárs only."

"And hast not thou brought a khalát[1] thence?"

"No, I have not."

And there the conversation ended.

But as soon as Arátoff found himself alone in his study he immediately felt as though something were embracing him round about, as though he were again in *the power*,—precisely that, in the power of another life, of another being. Although he had told Anna—in that outburst of sudden frenzy—that he was in love with Clara, that word now seemed to him devoid of sense and whimsical.—No, he was not in love; and how could he fall in love with a dead woman, whom, even during her lifetime he had not liked, whom he had almost forgotten?—No! But he was in the power of . . . . in *her* power . . . . he no

[1] The long Tatár coat, with large sleeves, and flaring, bias skirts.—TRANSLATOR.

longer belonged to himself. He had been *taken possession of*. Taken possession of to such a point that he was no longer trying to free himself either by ridiculing his own stupidity, or by arousing in himself if not confidence, at least hope that all this would pass over, that it was nothing but nerves,—or by seeking proofs of it,—or in any other way!—"If I meet him I shall take him" he recalled Clara's words reported by Anna . . . . and so now he had been taken.

But was not she dead? Yes; her body was dead . . . . but how about her soul?—Was not that immortal . . . . did it require bodily organs to manifest its power? Magnetism has demonstrated to us the influence of the living human soul upon another living human soul. . . . Why should not that influence be continued after death, if the soul remains alive?—But with what object? What might be the result of this?—But do we, in general, realise the object of everything which goes on around us?

These reflections occupied Arátoff to such a degree that at tea he suddenly asked Platósha whether she believed in the immortality of the soul. She did not understand at first what it was he had asked; but afterward she crossed herself and replied, "of course. How could the soul be otherwise than immortal?"

"But if that is so, can it act after death?" Arátoff put a second question.

The old woman replied that it could . . . . that is to say, it can pray for us; when it shall have passed through all sorts of tribulations, and is awaiting the Last Judgment. But during the first forty days it only hovers around the spot where its death occurred.

"During the first forty days?"

"Yes; and after that come its tribulations."[1]

Arátoff was surprised at his aunt's erudition, and went off to his own room.—And again he felt the same thing, that same power upon him. The power was manifested thus—that the image of Clara incessantly presented itself to him, in its most minute details,—details which he did not seem to have observed during her lifetime; he saw . . . he saw her fingers, her nails, the bands of hair on her cheeks below her temples, a small mole under the left eye; he saw the movement of her lips, her nostrils, her eyebrows . . . . and what sort of a gait she had, and how she held her head a little on the right side . . . . he saw everything!—He did not admire all this at all; he simply could not help thinking about it and seeing it.—Yet he did not dream about her during the first night after his return . . . . he was very weary and slept like one slain. On the other hand, no sooner did he awake than she again entered his room, and there she remained, as though she had been its owner; just as though she had

[1] See note on page 24.—Translator.

purchased for herself that right by her voluntary death, without asking him or requiring his permission.

He took her photograph; he began to reproduce it, to enlarge it. Then it occurred to him to arrange it for the stereoscope. It cost him a great deal of trouble, but at last he succeeded. He fairly started when he beheld through the glass her figure which had acquired the semblance of bodily substance. But that figure was grey, as though covered with dust . . . . and moreover, the eyes . . . . the eyes still gazed aside, as though they were averting themselves. He began to gaze at them for a long, long time, as though expecting that they might, at any moment, turn themselves in his direction . . . . he even puckered up his eyes deliberately . . . . but the eyes remained motionless, and the whole figure assumed the aspect of a doll. He went away, threw himself into an arm-chair, got out the leaf which he had torn from her diary, with the underlined words, and thought: "They say that people in love kiss the lines which have been written by a beloved hand; but I have no desire to do that —and the chirography appears to me ugly into the bargain. But in that line lies my condemnation."—At this point there flashed into his mind the promise he had made to Anna about the article. He seated himself at his table, and set about writing it; but everything he wrote turned

out so rhetorical . . . . worst of all, so artificial . . . . just as though he did not believe in what he was writing, or in his own feelings . . . . and Clara herself seemed to him unrecognisable, incomprehensible! She would not yield herself to him.

"No," he thought, throwing aside his pen, "either I have no talent for writing in general, or I must wait a while yet!"

He began to call to mind his visit to the Milovídoffs, and all the narration of Anna, of that kind, splendid Anna. . . . The word she had uttered: "unsullied!" suddenly struck him. It was exactly as though something had scorched and illuminated him.

"Yes," he said aloud, "she was unsullied and I am unsullied. . . . That is what has given her this power!"

Thoughts concerning the immortality of the soul, the life beyond the grave, again visited him. "Is it not said in the Bible: 'O death, where is thy sting?' And in Schiller: 'And the dead also shall live!' (*Auch die Todten sollen leben!*) — Or here again, in Mickiewicz, 'I shall love until life ends . . . . and after life ends!'—While one English writer has said: 'Love is stronger than death!'"—The biblical sentence acted with peculiar force on Arátoff. He wanted to look up the place where those words were to be found. . . . He had no Bible; he went to borrow one from

Platósha. She was astonished; but she got out an old, old book in a warped leather binding with brass clasps, all spotted with wax, and handed it to Arátoff. He carried it off to his own room, but for a long time could not find that verse .... but on the other hand, he hit upon another:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" .... (the Gospel of John, Chap. XV, verse 13).

He thought: "That is not properly expressed. —It should read: 'Greater *power* hath no man!'" ....

"But what if she did not set her soul on me at all? What if she killed herself merely because life had become a burden to her?—What if she, in conclusion, did not come to that tryst with the object of obtaining declarations of love at all?"

But at that moment Clara before her parting on the boulevard rose up before him. . . . He recalled that sorrowful expression on her face, and those tears, and those words:—"Akh, you have understood nothing!"

No! He could not doubt for what object and for what person she had laid down her life. . .

Thus passed that day until nightfall.

## XV

Arátoff went early to bed, without feeling particularly sleepy; but he hoped to find rest in bed.

The strained condition of his nerves caused him a fatigue which was far more intolerable than the physical weariness of the journey and the road. But great as was his fatigue, he could not get to sleep. He tried to read .... but the lines got entangled before his eyes. He extinguished his candle, and darkness took possession of his chamber.—But he continued to lie there sleepless, with closed eyes. . . . And now it seemed to him that some one was whispering in his ear. . . . "It is the beating of my heart, the rippling of the blood," he thought. . . . But the whisper passed into coherent speech. Some one was talking Russian hurriedly, plaintively, and incomprehensibly. It was impossible to distinguish a single separate word. . . . But it was Clara's voice!

Arátoff opened his eyes, rose up in bed, propped himself on his elbows. . . . The voice grew fainter, but continued its plaintive, hurried, unintelligible speech as before. . . .

It was indubitably Clara's voice!

Some one's fingers ran over the keys of the piano in light arpeggios. . . . Then the voice began to speak again. More prolonged sounds made themselves audible .... like moans .... always the same. And then words began to detach themselves. . . .

"Roses .... roses .... roses." . . .

"Roses," repeated Arátoff in a whisper.—

"Akh, yes! The roses which I saw on the head of that woman in my dream. . . ."

"Roses," was audible again.

"Is it thou?" asked Arátoff, whispering as before.

The voice suddenly ceased.

Arátoff waited . . . . waited—and dropped his head on his pillow. "A hallucination of hearing," he thought. "Well, and what if . . . . what if she really is here, close to me? . . . What if I were to see her, would I be frightened? But why should I be frightened? Why should I rejoice? Possibly because it would be a proof that there is another world, that the soul is immortal. —But, however, even if I were to see anything, that also might be a hallucination of the sight". . . .

Nevertheless he lighted his candle, and shot a glance over the whole room not without some trepidation . . . . and descried nothing unusual in it. He rose, approached the stereoscope . . . . and there again was the same grey doll, with eyes which gazed to one side. The feeling of alarm in Arátoff was replaced by one of vexation. He had been, as it were, deceived in his expectations . . . . and those same expectations appeared to him absurd.—"Well, this is downright stupid!" he muttered as he got back into bed, and blew out his light. Again profound darkness reigned in the room.

Arátoff made up his mind to go to sleep this time. . . . But a new sensation had cropped up within him. It seemed to him as though some one were standing in the middle of the room, not far from him, and breathing in a barely perceptible manner. He hastily turned round, opened his eyes. . . . But what could be seen in that impenetrable darkness?—He began to fumble for a match on his night-stand . . . . and suddenly it seemed to him as though some soft, noiseless whirlwind dashed across the whole room, above him, through him—and the words: "'T is I!" rang plainly in his ears. "'T is I! 'T is I! . . ."

Several moments passed before he succeeded in lighting a match.

Again there was no one in the room, and he no longer heard anything except the violent beating of his own heart. He drank a glass of water, and remained motionless, with his head resting on his hand.

He said to himself: "I will wait. Either this is all nonsense . . . . or she is here. She will not play with me like a cat with a mouse!" He waited, waited a long time . . . so long that the hand on which he was propping his head became numb . . . . but not a single one of his previous sensations was repeated. A couple of times his eyes closed. . . . He immediately opened them . . . . at least, it seemed to him that he opened them. Gradually they became riveted on the

door and so remained. The candle burned out and the room became dark once more . . . . but the door gleamed like a long, white spot in the midst of the gloom. And lo! that spot began to move, it contracted, vanished . . . . and in its place, on the threshold, a female form made its appearance. Arátoff looked at it intently . . . . it was Clara! And this time she was gazing straight at him, she moved toward him. . . . On her head was a wreath of red roses. . . . It kept undulating, rising. . . .

Before him stood his aunt in her nightcap, with a broad red ribbon, and in a white wrapper.

"Platósha!" he enunciated with difficulty.—"Is it you?"

"It is I," replied Platonída Ivánovna. . . . "It is I, Yashyónotchek, it is I."

"Why have you come?"

"Why, thou didst wake me. At first thou seemedst to be moaning all the while . . . . and then suddenly thou didst begin to shout: 'Save me! Help me!'"

"I shouted?"

"Yes, thou didst shout, and so hoarsely: 'Save me!'—I thought: 'O Lord! Can he be ill?' So I entered. Art thou well?"

"Perfectly well."

"Come, that means that thou hast had a bad dream. I will fumigate with incense if thou wishest—shall I?"

Again Arátoff gazed intently at his aunt, and burst into a loud laugh. . . . The figure of the kind old woman in nightcap and wrapper, with her frightened, long-drawn face, really was extremely comical. All that mysterious something which had surrounded him, had stifled him, all those delusions dispersed on the instant.

"No, Platósha, my dear, it is not necessary," he said.—"Forgive me for having involuntarily alarmed you. May your rest be tranquil—and I will go to sleep also."

Platonída Ivánovna stood a little while longer on the spot where she was, pointed at the candle, grumbled: "Why dost thou not extinguish it? . . . . there will be a catastrophe before long!" —and as she retired, could not refrain from making the sign of the cross over him from afar.

Arátoff fell asleep immediately, and slept until morning. He rose in a fine frame of mind . . . . although he regretted something. . . . He felt light and free. "What romantic fancies one does devise," he said to himself with a smile. He did not once glance either at the stereoscope or the leaf which he had torn out. But immediately after breakfast he set off to see Kupfer.

What drew him thither . . . . he dimly recognised.

## XVI

ARÁTOFF found his sanguine friend at home. He chatted a little with him, reproached him for having quite forgotten him and his aunt, listened to fresh laudations of the golden woman, the Princess, from whom Kupfer had just received, —from Yaroslávl,—a skull-cap embroidered with fish-scales . . . . and then suddenly sitting down in front of Kupfer, and looking him straight in the eye, he announced that he had been to Kazán.

"Thou hast been to Kazán? Why so?"

"Why, because I wished to collect information about that . . . . Clara Mílitch."

"The girl who poisoned herself?"

"Yes."

Kupfer shook his head.—"What a fellow thou art! And such a sly one! Thou hast travelled a thousand versts there and back . . . . and all for what? Hey? If there had only been some feminine interest there! Then I could understand everything! every sort of folly!"—Kupfer ruffled up his hair.—"But for the sake of collecting materials, as you learned men put it. . . . No, I thank you! That 's what the committee of statistics exists for!—Well, and what about it—didst thou make acquaintance with the old woman and with her sister? She 's a splendid girl, is n't she?"

"Splendid," assented Arátoff.—"She communicated to me many curious things."

"Did she tell thee precisely how Clara poisoned herself?"

"Thou meanest . . . . what dost thou mean?"

"Why, in what manner?"

"No . . . . She was still in such affliction. . . . I did not dare to question her too much. But was there anything peculiar about it?"

"Of course there was. Just imagine: she was to have acted that very day—and she did act. She took a phial of poison with her to the theatre, drank it before the first act, and in that condition played through the whole of that act. With the poison inside her! What dost thou think of that strength of will? What character, was n't it? And they say that she never sustained her rôle with so much feeling, with so much warmth! The audience suspected nothing, applauded, recalled her. . . . But as soon as the curtain fell she dropped down where she stood on the stage. She began to writhe . . . . and writhe . . . . and at the end of an hour her spirit fled! But is it possible I did not tell thee that? It was mentioned in the newspapers also."

Arátoff's hands suddenly turned cold and his chest began to heave. "No, thou didst not tell me that," he said at last.—"And dost thou not know what the piece was?"

Kupfer meditated.—"I was told the name of

the piece . . . . a young girl who has been betrayed appears in it. . . . It must be some drama or other. Clara was born for dramatic parts. Her very appearance. . . . But where art thou going?" Kupfer interrupted himself, perceiving that Arátoff was picking up his cap.

"I do not feel quite well," replied Arátoff. "Good-bye. . . . I will drop in some other time."

Kupfer held him back and looked him in the face.—"What a nervous fellow thou art, brother! Just look at thyself. . . . . Thou hast turned as white as clay."

"I do not feel well," repeated Arátoff, freeing himself from Kupfer's hands and going his way. Only at that moment did it become clear to him that he had gone to Kupfer with the sole object of talking about Clara. . . .

"About foolish, about unhappy Clara". . . .

But on reaching home he speedily recovered his composure to a certain extent.

The circumstances which had attended Clara's death at first exerted a shattering impression upon him . . . . but later on that acting "with the poison inside her," as Kupfer had expressed it, seemed to him a monstrous phrase, a piece of bravado, and he tried not to think of it, fearing to arouse within himself a feeling akin to aversion. But at dinner, as he sat opposite Platósha, he suddenly remembered her nocturnal apparition, recalled that bob-tailed wrapper, that cap

with the tall ribbon (and why should there be a ribbon on a night-cap?), the whole of that ridiculous figure, at which all his visions had dispersed into dust, as though at the whistle of the machinist in a fantastic ballet! He even made Platósha repeat the tale of how she had heard him shout, had taken fright, had leaped out of bed, had not been able at once to find either her own door or his, and so forth. In the evening he played cards with her and went off to his own room in a somewhat sad but fairly tranquil state of mind.

Arátoff did not think about the coming night, and did not fear it; he was convinced that he should pass it in the best possible manner. The thought of Clara awoke in him from time to time; but he immediately remembered that she had killed herself in a "spectacular" manner, and turned away. That "outrageous" act prevented other memories from rising in him. Giving a cursory glance at the stereoscope it seemed to him that she was looking to one side because she felt ashamed. Directly over the stereoscope on the wall, hung the portrait of his mother. Arátoff removed it from its nail, kissed it, and carefully put it away in a drawer. Why did he do this? Because that portrait must not remain in the vicinity of that woman . . . . or for some other reason—Arátoff did not quite know. But his mother's portrait evoked in him memories of his father . . . . of that father whom he had

seen dying in that same room, on that very bed. "What dost thou think about all this, father?" he mentally addressed him. "Thou didst understand all this; thou didst also believe in Schiller's world of spirits.—Give me counsel!"

"My father has given me counsel to drop all these follies," said Arátoff aloud, and took up a book. But he was not able to read long, and feeling a certain heaviness all through his body, he went to bed earlier than usual, in the firm conviction that he should fall asleep immediately.

And so it came about . . . . but his hopes for a peaceful night were not realised.

## XVII

Before the clock struck midnight he had a remarkable, a menacing dream.

It seemed to him that he was in a sumptuous country-house of which he was the owner. He had recently purchased the house, and all the estates attached to it. And he kept thinking: "It is well, now it is well, but disaster is coming!" Beside him was hovering a tiny little man, his manager; this man kept making obeisances, and trying to demonstrate to Arátoff how admirably everything about his house and estate was arranged.—"Please, please look," he kept reiterating, grinning at every word, "how everything

is flourishing about you! Here are horses . . . . what magnificent horses!" And Arátoff saw a row of huge horses. They were standing with their backs to him, in stalls; they had wonderful manes and tails . . . . but as soon as Arátoff walked past them the horses turned their heads toward him and viciously displayed their teeth.

"It is well," thought Arátoff, "but disaster is coming!"

"Please, please," repeated his manager again; "please come into the garden; see what splendid apples we have!"

The apples really were splendid, red, and round; but as soon as Arátoff looked at them, they began to shrivel and fall. . . . "Disaster is coming!" he thought.

"And here is the lake," murmurs the manager: —"how blue and smooth it is! And here is a little golden boat! . . . . Would you like to have a sail in it? . . . . It moves of itself."

"I will not get into it!" thought Arátoff; "a disaster is coming!" and nevertheless he did seat himself in the boat. On the bottom, writhing, lay a little creature resembling an ape; in its paws it was holding a phial filled with a dark liquid.

"Pray do not feel alarmed," shouted the manager from the shore. . . . "That is nothing! That is death! A prosperous journey!"

The boat darted swiftly onward . . . . but suddenly a hurricane arose, not like the one of

the day before, soft and noiseless—no; it is a black, terrible, howling hurricane!—Everything is in confusion round about;—and amid the swirling gloom Arátoff beholds Clara in theatrical costume: she is raising the phial to her lips, a distant "Bravo! bravo!" is audible, and a coarse voice shouts in Arátoff's ear:

"Ah! And didst thou think that all this would end in a comedy?—No! it is a tragedy! a tragedy!"

Arátoff awoke all in a tremble. It was not dark in the room. . . . A faint and melancholy light streamed from somewhere or other, impassively illuminating all objects. Arátoff did not try to account to himself for the light. . . . He felt but one thing: Clara was there in that room . . . . he felt her presence . . . . he was again and forever in her power!

A shriek burst from his lips: "Clara, art thou here?"

"Yes!" rang out clearly in the middle of the room illuminated with the motionless light.

Arátoff doubly repeated his question. . . .

"Yes!" was audible once more.

"Then I want to see thee!" he cried, springing out of bed.

For several moments he stood in one spot, treading the cold floor with his bare feet. His eyes roved: "But where? Where?" whispered his lips. . . .

Nothing was to be seen or heard.

He looked about him, and noticed that the faint light which filled the room proceeded from a night-light, screened by a sheet of paper, and placed in one corner, probably by Platósha while he was asleep. He even detected the odour of incense also, in all probability, the work of her hands.

He hastily dressed himself. Remaining in bed, sleeping, was not to be thought of.—Then he took up his stand in the centre of the room and folded his arms. The consciousness of Clara's presence was stronger than ever within him.

And now he began to speak, in a voice which was not loud, but with the solemn deliberation wherewith exorcisms are uttered:

"Clara,"—thus did he begin,—"if thou art really here, if thou seest me, if thou hearest me, reveal thyself!... If that power which I feel upon me is really thy power,—reveal thyself! If thou understandest how bitterly I repent of not having understood thee, of having repulsed thee,—reveal thyself!—If that which I have heard is really thy voice; if the feeling which has taken possession of me is love; if thou art now convinced that I love thee,—I who up to this time have not loved, and have not known a single woman;—if thou knowest that after thy death I fell passionately, irresistibly in love with thee,

if thou dost not wish me to go mad—reveal thyself!"

No sooner had Arátoff uttered this last word than he suddenly felt some one swiftly approach him from behind, as on that occasion upon the boulevard—and lay a hand upon his shoulder. He wheeled round—and saw no one. But the consciousness of *her* presence became so distinct, so indubitable, that he cast another hasty glance behind him. . . .

What was that?! In his arm-chair, a couple of paces from him, sat a woman all in black. Her head was bent to one side, as in the stereoscope. . . . . It was she! It was Clara! But what a stern, what a mournful face!

Arátoff sank down gently upon his knees.—Yes, he was right, then; neither fear, nor joy was in him, nor even surprise. . . . His heart even began to beat more quietly.—The only thing in him was the feeling: "Ah! At last! At last!"

"Clara," he began in a faint but even tone, "why dost thou not look at me? I know it is thou . . . but I might, seest thou, think that my imagination had created an image like *that one*. . . ." (He pointed in the direction of the stereoscope.) . . . . "Prove to me that it is thou. . . . . Turn toward me, look at me, Clara!"

Clara's hand rose slowly . . . . and fell again.

"Clara! Clara! Turn toward me!"

And Clara's head turned slowly, her drooping lids opened, and the dark pupils of her eyes were fixed on Arátoff.

He started back, and uttered a tremulous, long-drawn: "Ah!"

Clara gazed intently at him . . . . but her eyes, her features preserved their original thoughtfully-stern, almost displeased expression. With precisely that expression she had presented herself on the platform upon the day of the literary morning, before she had caught sight of Arátoff. And now, as on that occasion also, she suddenly flushed scarlet, her face grew animated, her glance flashed, and a joyful, triumphant smile parted her lips. . . .

"I am forgiven!"—cried Arátoff.—"Thou hast conquered. . . So take me! For I am thine, and thou art mine!"

He darted toward her, he tried to kiss those smiling, those triumphant lips,—and he did kiss them, he felt their burning touch, he felt even the moist chill of her teeth, and a rapturous cry rang through the half-dark room.

Platonída Ivánovna ran in and found him in a swoon. He was on his knees; his head was lying on the arm-chair; his arms, outstretched before him, hung powerless; his pale face breathed forth the intoxication of boundless happiness.

Platonída Ivánovna threw herself beside him, embraced him, stammered: "Yásha! Yáshenka!

Yashenyónotchek! !" [1] tried to lift him up with her bony arms . . . . he did not stir. Then Platonída Ivánovna set to screaming in an unrecognisable voice. The maid-servant ran in. Together they managed somehow to lift him up, seated him in a chair, and began to dash water on him—and water in which a holy image had been washed at that. . . .

He came to himself; but merely smiled in reply to his aunt's queries, and with such a blissful aspect that she became more perturbed than ever, and kept crossing first him and then herself. . . . . At last Arátoff pushed away her hand, and still with the same beatific expression on his countenance, he said:—

"What is the matter with you, Platósha?"

"What ails thee, Yáshenka?"

"Me?—I am happy . . . . happy, Platósha . . . . that is what ails me. But now I want to go to bed and sleep."

He tried to rise, but felt such a weakness in his legs and in all his body that he was not in a condition to undress and get into bed himself without the aid of his aunt and of the maid-servant. But he fell asleep very quickly, preserving on his face that same blissfully-rapturous expression. Only his face was extremely pale.

[1] Diminutives of Yákoff, implying great affection.—Translator.

## XVIII

WHEN Platonída Ivánovna entered his room on the following morning he was in the same condition . . . . but his weakness had not passed off, and he even preferred to remain in bed. Platonída Ivánovna did not like the pallor of his face in particular.

"What does it mean, O Lord!" she thought. "There is n't a drop of blood in his face, he refuses his beef-tea; he lies there and laughs, and keeps asserting that he is quite well!"

He refused breakfast also.—"Why dost thou do that, Yásha?" she asked him; "dost thou intend to lie like this all day?"

"And what if I do?" replied Arátoff, affectionately.

This very affection also did not please Platonída Ivánovna. Arátoff wore the aspect of a man who has learned a great secret, which is very agreeable to him, and is jealously clinging to it and reserving it for himself. He was waiting for night, not exactly with impatience but with curiosity.

"What comes next?" he asked himself;—"what will happen?" He had ceased to be surprised, to be perplexed; he cherished no doubt as to his having entered into communication with Clara; that they loved each other . . . . he did

not doubt, either. Only . . . . what can come of such a love?—He recalled that kiss . . . . and a wondrous chill coursed swiftly and sweetly through all his limbs.—"Romeo and Juliet did not exchange such a kiss as that!" he thought. "But the next time I shall hold out better. . . . I shall possess her. . . . She will come with the garland of tiny roses in her black curls. . . . .

"But after that what? For we cannot live together, can we? Consequently I must die in order to be with her? Was not that what she came for,—and is it not in *that* way she wishes to take me?

"Well, and what of that? If I must die, I must. Death does not terrify me in the least now. For it cannot annihilate me, can it? On the contrary, only *thus* and *there* shall I be happy . . . . as I have never been happy in my lifetime, as she has never been in hers. . . . For we are both unsullied!—Oh, that kiss!"

PLATONÍDA IVÁNOVNA kept entering Arátoff's room; she did not worry him with questions, she merely took a look at him, whispered, sighed, and went out again.—But now he refused his dinner also. . . . Things were getting quite too bad. The old woman went off to her friend, the medical man of the police-district, in whom she had faith simply because he did not drink and was married to a German woman. Arátoff was

astonished when she brought the man to him; but Platónida Ivánovna began so insistently to entreat her Yáshenka to permit Paramón Paramónitch (that was the medical man's name) to examine him—come, now, just for her sake!—that Arátoff consented. Paramón Paramónitch felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, interrogated him after a fashion, and finally announced that it was indispensably necessary to "auscultate" him. Arátoff was in such a submissive frame of mind that he consented to this also. The doctor delicately laid bare his breast, delicately tapped it, listened, smiled, prescribed some drops and a potion, but chief of all, advised him to be quiet, and refrain from violent emotions.

"You don't say so!" thought Arátoff. . . . "Well, brother, thou hast bethought thyself too late!"

"What ails Yásha?" asked Platonída Ivánovna, as she handed Paramón Paramónitch a three-ruble bank-note on the threshold. The district doctor, who, like all contemporary doctors, —especially those of them who wear a uniform, —was fond of showing off his learned terminology, informed her that her nephew had all the dioptric symptoms of nervous cardialgia, and that febris was present also.

"But speak more simply, dear little father," broke in Platónida Ivánovna; "don't scare me

with Latin; thou art not in an apothecary's shop!"

"His heart is out of order," explained the doctor;—"well, and he has fever also," . . . . and he repeated his advice with regard to repose and moderation.

"But surely there is no danger?" sternly inquired Platonída Ivánovna, as much as to say: "Look out and don't try your Latin on me again!"

"Not at present!"

The doctor went away, and Platonída Ivánovna took to grieving. . . . Nevertheless she sent to the apothecary for the medicine, which Aratóff would not take, despite her entreaties. He even refused herb-tea.

"What makes you worry so, dear?" he said to her. "I assure you I am now the most perfectly healthy and happy man in the whole world!"

Platonída Ivánovna merely shook her head. Toward evening he became slightly feverish; yet he still insisted upon it that she should not remain in his room, and should go away to her own to sleep. Platonída Ivánovna obeyed, but did not undress, and did not go to bed; she sat up in an arm-chair and kept listening and whispering her prayer.

She was beginning to fall into a doze, when suddenly a dreadful, piercing shriek awakened

her. She sprang to her feet, rushed into Arátoff's study, and found him lying on the floor, as upon the night before.

But he did not come to himself as he had done the night before, work over him as they would. That night he was seized with a high fever, complicated by inflammation of the heart.

A few days later he died.

A strange circumstance accompanied his second swoon. When they lifted him up and put him to bed, there proved to be a small lock of woman's black hair clutched in his right hand. Where had that hair come from? Anna Semyónovna had such a lock, which she had kept after Clara's death; but why should she have given to Arátoff an object which was so precious to her? Could she have laid it into the diary, and not noticed the fact when she gave him the book?

In the delirium which preceded his death Arátoff called himself Romeo . . . . after the poison; he talked about a marriage contracted, consummated;—said that now he knew the meaning of delight. Especially dreadful for Platonída Ivánovna was the moment when Arátoff, recovering consciousness, and seeing her by his bedside, said to her:

"Aunty, why art thou weeping? Is it because I must die? But dost thou not know that love is stronger than death? . . . . Death! O Death,

where is thy sting? Thou must not weep, but rejoice, even as I rejoice. . . ."

And again the face of the dying man beamed with that same blissful smile which had made the poor old woman shudder so.

# POEMS IN PROSE

(1878–1882)

# POEMS IN PROSE

*From the Editor of the "European Messenger"*

IN compliance with our request, Iván Sergyéevitch Turgénieff has given his consent to our sharing now with the readers of our journal, without delay, those passing comments, thoughts, images which he had noted down, under one impression or another of current existence, during the last five years,—those which belong to him personally, and those which pertain to society in general. They, like many others, have not found a place in those finished productions of the past which have already been presented to the world, and have formed a complete collection in themselves. From among these the author has made fifty selections.

In the letter accompanying the pages which we are now about to print, I. S. Turgénieff says, in conclusion:

" . . . . Let not your reader peruse these 'Poems in Prose' at one sitting; he will probably be bored, and the book will fall from his hands. But let him read them separately,—today one, to-morrow another,—and then perchance

some one of them may leave some trace behind in his soul. . . ."

The pages have no general title; the author has written on their wrapper: "Senilia—An Old Man's Jottings,"—but we have preferred the words carelessly dropped by the author in the end of his letter to us, quoted above,—"Poems in Prose"—and we print the pages under that general title. In our opinion, it fully expresses the source from which such comments might present themselves to the soul of an author well known for his sensitiveness to the various questions of life, as well as the impression which they may produce on the reader, "leaving behind in his soul" many things. They are, in reality, poems in spite of the fact that they are written in prose. We place them in chronological order, beginning with the year 1878.

M. S.[1]

October 28, 1882.

## I

## (1878)

## THE VILLAGE

THE last day of July; for a thousand versts round about lies Russia, the fatherland.

The whole sky is suffused with an even azure;

[1] Mikhaïl Stasiulévitch.—TRANSLATOR.

there is only one little cloud in it, which is half floating, half melting. There is no wind, it is warm . . . . the air is like new milk!

Larks are carolling; large-cropped pigeons are cooing; the swallows dart past in silence; the horses neigh and munch, the dogs do not bark, but stand peaceably wagging their tails.

And there is an odour of smoke abroad, and of grass,—and a tiny whiff of tan,—and another of leather.—The hemp-patches, also, are in their glory, and emit their heavy but agreeable fragrance.

A deep but not long ravine. Along its sides, in several rows, grow bulky-headed willows, stripped bare at the bottom. Through the ravine runs a brook; on its bottom tiny pebbles seem to tremble athwart its pellucid ripples.—Far away, at the spot where the rims of earth and sky come together, is the bluish streak of a large river.

Along the ravine, on one side are neat little storehouses, and buildings with tightly-closed doors; on the other side are five or six pine-log cottages with board roofs. Over each roof rises a tall pole with a starling house; over each tiny porch is an openwork iron horse's head with a stiff mane.[1] The uneven window-panes sparkle with the hues of the rainbow. Jugs holding bouquets are painted on the shutters. In front

[1] The favourite decoration in rustic architecture.—TRANSLATOR.

of each cottage stands sedately a precise little bench; on the earthen banks around the foundations of the house cats lie curled in balls, with their transparent ears pricked up on the alert; behind the lofty thresholds the anterooms look dark and cool.

I am lying on the very brink of the ravine, on an outspread horse-cloth; round about are whole heaps of new-mown hay, which is fragrant to the point of inducing faintness. The sagacious householders have spread out the hay in front of their cottages: let it dry a little more in the hot sun, and then away with it to the barn! It will be a glorious place for a nap!

The curly heads of children project from each haycock; crested hens are searching in the hay for gnats and small beetles; a white-toothed puppy is sprawling among the tangled blades of grass.

Ruddy-curled youths in clean, low-girt shirts, and heavy boots with borders, are bandying lively remarks as they stand with their breasts resting on the unhitched carts, and display their teeth in a grin.

From a window a round-faced lass peeps out; she laughs, partly at their words, and partly at the pranks of the children in the heaped-up hay.

Another lass with her sturdy arms is drawing a huge, dripping bucket from the well. . . . The

bucket trembles and rocks on the rope, scattering long, fiery drops.

In front of me stands an aged housewife in a new-checked petticoat of homespun and new peasant-shoes.

Large inflated beads in three rows encircle her thin, swarthy neck; her grey hair is bound about with a yellow kerchief with red dots; it droops low over her dimmed eyes.

But her aged eyes smile in cordial wise; her whole wrinkled face smiles. The old woman must be in her seventh decade . . . . and even now it can be seen that she was a beauty in her day!

With the sunburned fingers of her right hand widely spread apart, she holds a pot of cool, unskimmed milk, straight from the cellar; the sides of the pot are covered with dewdrops, like small pearl beads. On the palm of her left hand the old woman offers me a big slice of bread still warm from the oven. As much as to say: "Eat, and may health be thine, thou passing guest!"

A cock suddenly crows and busily flaps his wings; an imprisoned calf lows without haste, in reply.

"Hey, what fine oats!" the voice of my coachman makes itself heard. . . .

O Russian contentment, repose, plenty! O free village! O tranquillity and abundance!

And I thought to myself: "What care we for

the cross on the dome of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, and all the other things for which we strive, we people of the town?"

February, 1878.

## A CONVERSATION

"Never yet has human foot trod either the Jungfrau or the Finsteraarhorn."

THE summits of the Alps. . . . A whole chain of steep cliffs. . . . The very heart of the mountains.

Overhead a bright, mute, pale-green sky. A hard, cruel frost; firm, sparkling snow; from beneath the snow project grim blocks of ice-bound, wind-worn cliffs.

Two huge masses, two giants rise aloft, one on each side of the horizon: the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn.

And the Jungfrau says to its neighbour: "What news hast thou to tell? Thou canst see better.—What is going on there below?"

Several thousand years pass by like one minute. And the Finsteraarhorn rumbles in reply: "Dense clouds veil the earth. . . . Wait!"

More thousands of years elapse, as it were one minute.

"Well, what now?" inquires the Jungfrau.

"Now I can see; down yonder, below, every-

thing is still the same: party-coloured, tiny. The waters gleam blue; the forests are black; heaps of stones piled up shine grey. Around them small beetles are still bustling,—thou knowest, those two-legged beetles who have as yet been unable to defile either thou or me."

"Men?"

"Yes, men."

Thousands of years pass, as it were one minute.

"Well, and what now?" asks the Jungfrau.

"I seem to see fewer of the little beetles," thunders the Finsteraarhorn. "Things have become clearer down below; the waters have contracted; the forests have grown thinner."

More thousands of years pass, as it were one minute.

"What dost thou see?" says the Jungfrau.

"Things seem to have grown clearer round us, close at hand," replies the Finsteraarhorn; "well, and yonder, far away, in the valleys there is still a spot, and something is moving."

"And now?" inquires the Jungfrau, after other thousands of years, which are as one minute.

"Now it is well," replies the Finsteraarhorn; "it is clean everywhere, quite white, wherever one looks. . . . Everywhere is our snow, level snow and ice. Everything is congealed. It is well now, and calm."

"Good," said the Jungfrau.—"But thou and I have chattered enough, old fellow. It is time to sleep."

"It is time!"

The huge mountains slumber; the green, clear heaven slumbers over the earth which has grown dumb forever.

February, 1878.

## THE OLD WOMAN

I WAS walking across a spacious field, alone.

And suddenly I thought I heard light, cautious footsteps behind my back. . . . Some one was following me.

I glanced round and beheld a tiny, bent old woman, all enveloped in grey rags. The old woman's face was visible from beneath them: a yellow, wrinkled, sharp-nosed, toothless face.

I stepped up to her. . . . She halted.

"Who art thou? What dost thou want? Art thou a beggar? Dost thou expect alms?"

The old woman made no answer. I bent down to her and perceived that both her eyes were veiled with a semi-transparent, whitish membrane or film, such as some birds have; therewith they protect their eyes from too brilliant a light.

But in the old woman's case that film did not move and reveal the pupils . . . . from which I inferred that she was blind.

"Dost thou want alms?" I repeated my question.—"Why art thou following me?"—But, as before, the old woman did not answer, and merely shrank back almost imperceptibly.

I turned from her and went my way.

And lo! again I hear behind me those same light, measured footsteps which seem to be creeping stealthily up.

"There 's that woman again!" I said to myself.—"Why has she attached herself to me?"—But at this point I mentally added: "Probably, owing to her blindness, she has lost her way, and now she is guiding herself by the sound of my steps, in order to come out, in company with me, at some inhabited place. Yes, yes; that is it."

But a strange uneasiness gradually gained possession of my thoughts: it began to seem to me as though that old woman were not only following me, but were guiding me,—that she was thrusting me now to the right, now to the left, and that I was involuntarily obeying her.

Still I continue to walk on . . . . but now, in front of me, directly in my road, something looms up black and expands . . . . some sort of pit. . . . "The grave!" flashes through my mind.—"That is where she is driving me!"

I wheel abruptly round. Again the old woman is before me . . . . but she sees! She gazes at me with large, evil eyes which bode me ill . . . . the eyes of a bird of prey. . . . I bend down to

her face, to her eyes. . . . Again there is the same film, the same blind, dull visage as before. . . .

"Akh!" I think . . . . "this old woman is my Fate—that Fate which no man can escape!

"I cannot get away! I cannot get away!—What madness. . . . I must make an effort." And I dart to one side, in a different direction.

I advance briskly. . . But the light footsteps, as before, rustle behind me, close, close behind me. . . . And in front of me again the pit yawns.

Again I turn in another direction. . . . And again there is the same rustling behind me, the same menacing spot in front of me.

And no matter in what direction I dart, like a hare pursued . . . . it is always the same, the same!

"Stay!" I think.—"I will cheat her! I will not go anywhere at all!"—and I instantaneously sit down on the ground.

The old woman stands behind me, two paces distant.—I do not hear her, but I feel that she is there.

And suddenly I behold that spot which had loomed black in the distance, gliding on, creeping up to me itself!

O God! I glance behind me. . . . The old woman is looking straight at me, and her toothless mouth is distorted in a grin. . . .

"Thou canst not escape!"

February, 1878.

## THE DOG

THERE are two of us in the room, my dog and I. . . . A frightful storm is raging out of doors.

The dog is sitting in front of me, and gazing straight into my eyes.

And I, also, am looking him straight in the eye.

He seems to be anxious to say something to me. He is dumb, he has no words, he does not understand himself—but I understand him.

I understand that, at this moment, both in him and in me there dwells one and the same feeling, that there is no difference whatever between us. We are exactly alike; in each of us there burns and glows the selfsame tremulous flame.

Death is swooping down upon us, it is waving its cold, broad wings. . . .

"And this is the end!"

Who shall decide afterward, precisely what sort of flame burned in each one of us?

No! it is not an animal and a man exchanging glances. . . .

It is two pairs of eyes exactly alike fixed on each other.

And in each of those pairs, in the animal and in the man, one and the same life is huddling up timorously to the other.

February, 1878.

## THE RIVAL

I HAD a comrade-rival; not in our studies, not in the service or in love; but our views did not agree on any point, and every time we met, interminable arguments sprang up.

We argued about art, religion, science, about the life of earth and matters beyond the grave,—especially life beyond the grave.

He was a believer and an enthusiast. One day he said to me: "Thou laughest at everything; but if I die before thee, I will appear to thee from the other world. . . . We shall see whether thou wilt laugh then."

And, as a matter of fact, he did die before me, while he was still young in years; but years passed, and I had forgotten his promise,—his threat.

One night I was lying in bed, and could not get to sleep, neither did I wish to do so.

It was neither light nor dark in the room; I began to stare into the grey half-gloom.

And suddenly it seemed to me that my rival was standing between the two windows, and nodding his head gently and sadly downward from above.

I was not frightened, I was not even surprised . . . . but rising up slightly in bed, and propping myself on my elbow, I began to gaze with

redoubled attention at the figure which had so unexpectedly presented itself.

The latter continued to nod its head.

"What is it?" I said at last.—"Art thou exulting? Or art thou pitying?—What is this—a warning or a reproach? . . . Or dost thou wish to give me to understand that thou wert in the wrong? That we were both in the wrong? What art thou experiencing? The pains of hell? The bliss of paradise? Speak at least one word!"

But my rival did not utter a single sound—and only went on nodding his head sadly and submissively, as before, downward from above.

I burst out laughing . . . . he vanished.

February, 1878.

## THE BEGGAR MAN

I WAS passing along the street when a beggar, a decrepit old man, stopped me.

Swollen, tearful eyes, blue lips, bristling rags, unclean sores. . . . Oh, how horribly had poverty gnawed that unhappy being!

He stretched out to me a red, bloated, dirty hand. . . . He moaned, he bellowed for help.

I began to rummage in all my pockets. . . . Neither purse, nor watch, nor even handkerchief did I find. . . . I had taken nothing with me.

And the beggar still waited . . . . and ex-

tended his hand, which swayed and trembled feebly.

Bewildered, confused, I shook that dirty, tremulous hand heartily. . . .

"Blame me not, brother; I have nothing, brother."

The beggar man fixed his swollen eyes upon me; his blue lips smiled—and in his turn he pressed my cold fingers.

"Never mind, brother," he mumbled. "Thanks for this also, brother.—This also is an alms, brother."

I understood that I had received an alms from my brother.

February, 1878.

## "THOU SHALT HEAR THE JUDGMENT OF THE DULLARD . . ."

*Púshkin*

"THOU shalt hear the judgment of the dullard . . ." Thou hast always spoken the truth, thou great writer of ours; thou hast spoken it this time, also.

"The judgment of the dullard and the laughter of the crowd." . . . Who is there that has not experienced both the one and the other?

All this can—and must be borne; and whosoever hath the strength,—let him despise it.

But there are blows which beat more painfully on the heart itself. . . . A man has done everything in his power; he has toiled arduously, lovingly, honestly. . . . And honest souls turn squeamishly away from him; honest faces flush with indignation at his name. "Depart! Begone!" honest young voices shout at him.—"We need neither thee nor thy work, thou art defiling our dwelling—thou dost not know us and dost not understand us. . . . Thou art our enemy!"

What is that man to do then? Continue to toil, make no effort to defend himself—and not even expect a more just estimate.

In former days tillers of the soil cursed the traveller who brought them potatoes in place of bread, the daily food of the poor man. . . . They snatched the precious gift from the hands outstretched to them, flung it in the mire, trod it under foot.

Now they subsist upon it—and do not even know the name of their benefactor.

So be it! What matters his name to them? He, although he be nameless, has saved them from hunger.

Let us strive only that what we offer may be equally useful food.

Bitter is unjust reproach in the mouths of people whom one loves. . . . But even that can be endured. . . .

"Beat me—but hear me out!" said the Athenian chieftain to the Spartan chieftain.

"Beat me—but be healthy and full fed!" is what we ought to say.

February, 1878.

## THE CONTENTED MAN

ALONG a street of the capital is skipping a man who is still young.—His movements are cheerful, alert; his eyes are beaming, his lips are smiling, his sensitive face is pleasantly rosy. . . . He is all contentment and joy.

What has happened to him? Has he come into an inheritance? Has he been elevated in rank? Is he hastening to a love tryst? Or, simply, has he breakfasted well, and is it a sensation of health, a sensation of full-fed strength which is leaping for joy in all his limbs? Or they may have hung on his neck thy handsome, eight-pointed cross, O Polish King Stanislaus!

No. He has concocted a calumny against an acquaintance, he has assiduously disseminated it, he has heard it—that same calumny—from the mouth of another acquaintance—and *has believed it himself*.

Oh, how contented, how good even at this moment is that nice, highly-promising young man.

February, 1878.

## THE RULE OF LIFE

"If you desire thoroughly to mortify and even to injure an opponent," said an old swindler to me, "reproach him with the very defect or vice of which you feel conscious in yourself.—Fly into a rage . . . . and reproach him!

"In the first place, that makes other people think that you do not possess that vice.

"In the second place, your wrath may even be sincere. . . . You may profit by the reproaches of your own conscience.

"If, for example, you are a renegade, reproach your adversary with having no convictions!

"If you yourself are a lackey in soul, say to him with reproof that he is a lackey . . . . the lackey of civilisation, of Europe, of socialism!"

"You may even say, the lackey of non-lackey-ism!" I remarked.

"You may do that also," chimed in the old rascal.

February, 1878.

## THE END OF THE WORLD

### A DREAM

It seems to me as though I am somewhere in Russia, in the wilds, in a plain country house.

The chamber is large, low-ceiled, with three windows; the walls are smeared with white paint; there is no furniture. In front of the house is a bare plain; gradually descending, it recedes into the distance; the grey, monotoned sky hangs over it like a canopy.

I am not alone; half a score of men are with me in the room. All plain folk, plainly clad; they are pacing up and down in silence, as though by stealth. They avoid one another, and yet they are incessantly exchanging uneasy glances.

Not one of them knows why he has got into this house, or who the men are with him. On all faces there is disquiet and melancholy . . . . all, in turn, approach the windows and gaze attentively about them, as though expecting something from without.

Then again they set to roaming up and down. Among us a lad of short stature is running about; from time to time he screams in a shrill, monotonous voice: "Daddy, I 'm afraid!"—This shrill cry makes me sick at heart—and I also begin to be afraid. . . . Of what? I myself do not know. Only I feel that a great, great calamity is on its way, and is drawing near.

And the little lad keeps screaming. Akh, if I could only get away from here! How stifling it is! How oppressive! . . . . But it is impossible to escape.

That sky is like a shroud. And there is no wind. . . . Is the air dead?

Suddenly the boy ran to the window and began to scream with the same plaintive voice as usual: "Look! Look! The earth has fallen in!"

"What? Fallen in?"—In fact: there had been a plain in front of the house, but now the house is standing on the crest of a frightful mountain!—The horizon has fallen, has gone down, and from the very house itself a black, almost perpendicular declivity descends.

We have all thronged to the window. . . . Horror freezes our hearts.—"There it is . . . . there it is!" whispers my neighbour.

And lo! along the whole distant boundary of the earth something has begun to stir, some small, round hillocks have begun to rise and fall.

"It is the sea!" occurs to us all at one and the same moment.—"It will drown us all directly. . . . . Only, how can it wax and rise up? On that precipice?"

And nevertheless it does wax, and wax hugely. . . . . It is no longer separate hillocks which are tumbling in the distance. . . . A dense, monstrous wave engulfs the entire circle of the horizon.

It is flying, flying upon us!—Like an icy hurricane it sweeps on, swirling with the outer darkness. Everything round about has begun to quiver,—and yonder, in that oncoming mass,—

there are crashing and thunder, and a thousand-throated, iron barking. . . .

Ha! What a roaring and howling! It is the earth roaring with terror. . . .

It is the end of it! The end of all things!

The boy screamed once more. . . . I tried to seize hold of my comrades, but we, all of us, were already crushed, buried, drowned, swept away by that icy, rumbling flood, as black as ink.

Darkness . . . . eternal darkness!

Gasping for breath, I awoke.

March, 1878.

## MASHA

When I was living in Petersburg,—many years ago,—whenever I had occasion to hire a public cabman I entered into conversation with him.

I was specially fond of conversing with the night cabmen,—poor peasants of the suburbs, who have come to town with their ochre-tinted little sledges and miserable little nags in the hope of supporting themselves and collecting enough money to pay their quit-rent to their owners.

So, then, one day I hired such a cabman. . . . He was a youth of twenty years, tall, well-built, a fine, dashing young fellow; he had blue eyes and rosy cheeks; his red-gold hair curled in rings beneath a wretched little patched cap, which was pulled down over his very eyebrows. And how

in the world was that tattered little coat ever got upon those shoulders of heroic mould!

But the cabman's handsome, beardless face seemed sad and lowering.

I entered into conversation with him. Sadness was discernible in his voice also.

"What is it, brother?" I asked him.—"Why art not thou cheerful? Hast thou any grief?"

The young fellow did not reply to me at once.

"I have, master, I have," he said at last.—"And such a grief that it would be better if I were not alive. My wife is dead."

"Didst thou love her . . . . thy wife?"

The young fellow turned toward me; only he bent his head a little.

"I did, master. This is the eighth month since . . . . but I cannot forget. It is eating away my heart . . . . so it is! And why must she die? She was young! Healthy! . . . . In one day the cholera settled her."

"And was she of a good disposition?"

"Akh, master!" sighed the poor fellow, heavily.—"And on what friendly terms she and I lived together! She died in my absence. When I heard here that they had already buried her, I hurried immediately to the village, home. It was already after midnight when I arrived. I entered my cottage, stopped short in the middle of it, and said so softly: 'Masha! hey, Masha!' Only a cricket shrilled.—Then I fell to weeping,

and sat down on the cottage floor, and how I did beat my palm against the ground!—'Thy bowels are insatiable!' I said. . . . 'Thou hast devoured her . . . . devour me also!'—Akh, Masha!"

"Masha," he added in a suddenly lowered voice. And without letting his rope reins out of his hands, he squeezed a tear out of his eye with his mitten, shook it off, flung it to one side, shrugged his shoulders—and did not utter another word.

As I alighted from the sledge I gave him an extra fifteen kopéks. He made me a low obeisance, grasping his cap in both hands, and drove off at a foot-pace over the snowy expanse of empty street, flooded with the grey mist of the January frost.

April, 1878.

## THE FOOL

Once upon a time a fool lived in the world.

For a long time he lived in clover; but gradually rumours began to reach him to the effect that he bore the reputation everywhere of a brainless ninny.

The fool was disconcerted and began to fret over the question how he was to put an end to those unpleasant rumours.

A sudden idea at last illumined his dark little

brain. . . . And without the slightest delay he put it into execution.

An acquaintance met him on the street and began to praise a well-known artist. . . . "Good gracious!" exclaimed the fool, "that artist was relegated to the archives long ago. . . . Don't you know that?—I did not expect that of you. . . . . You are behind the times."

The acquaintance was frightened, and immediately agreed with the fool.

"What a fine book I have read to-day!" said another acquaintance to him.

"Good gracious!" cried the fool.—"Are n't you ashamed of yourself? That book is good for nothing; everybody dropped it in disgust long ago.—Don't you know that?—You are behind the times."

And that acquaintance also was frightened and agreed with the fool.

"What a splendid man my friend N. N. is!" said a third acquaintance to the fool.—"There 's a truly noble being for you!"

"Good gracious!"—exclaimed the fool,—"it is well known that N. N. is a scoundrel! He has robbed all his relatives. Who is there that does not know it? You are behind the times."

The third acquaintance also took fright and agreed with the fool, and renounced his friend. And whosoever or whatsoever was praised in the fool's presence, he had the same retort for all.

He even sometimes added reproachfully: "And do you still believe in the authorities?"

"A malicious person! A bilious man!" his acquaintances began to say about the fool.—"But what a head!"

"And what a tongue!" added others.

"Oh, yes; he is talented!"

It ended in the publisher of a newspaper proposing to the fool that he should take charge of his critical department.

And the fool began to criticise everything and everybody, without making the slightest change in his methods, or in his exclamations.

Now he, who formerly shrieked against authorities, is an authority himself,—and the young men worship him and fear him.

But what are they to do, poor fellows? Although it is not proper—generally speaking—to worship . . . . yet in this case, if one does not do it, he will find himself classed among the men who are behind the times!

There is a career for fools among cowards.

April, 1878.

## AN ORIENTAL LEGEND

WHO in Bagdad does not know the great Giaffar, the sun of the universe?

One day, many years ago, when he was still

a young man, Giaffar was strolling in the suburbs of Bagdad.

Suddenly there fell upon his ear a hoarse cry: some one was calling desperately for help.

Giaffar was distinguished among the young men of his own age for his good sense and prudence; but he had a compassionate heart, and he trusted to his strength.

He ran in the direction of the cry, and beheld a decrepit old man pinned against the wall of the city by two brigands who were robbing him.

Giaffar drew his sword and fell upon the malefactors. One he slew, the other he chased away.

The old man whom he had liberated fell at his rescuer's feet, and kissing the hem of his garment, exclaimed: "Brave youth, thy magnanimity shall not remain unrewarded. In appearance I am a beggar; but only in appearance. I am not a common man.—Come to-morrow morning early to the chief bazaar; I will await thee there at the fountain—and thou shalt convince thyself as to the justice of my words."

Giaffar reflected: "In appearance this man is a beggar, it is true; but all sorts of things happen. Why should not I try the experiment?"—and he answered: "Good, my father, I will go."

The old man looked him in the eye and went away.

On the following morning, just as day was breaking, Giaffar set out for the bazaar. The

old man was already waiting for him, with his elbows leaning on the marble basin of the fountain.

Silently he took Giaffar by the hand and led him to a small garden, surrounded on all sides by high walls.

In the very centre of this garden, on a green lawn, grew a tree of extraordinary aspect.

It resembled a cypress; only its foliage was of azure hue.

Three fruits—three apples—hung on the slender up-curving branches. One of medium size was oblong in shape, of a milky-white hue; another was large, round, and bright red; the third was small, wrinkled and yellowish.

The whole tree was rustling faintly, although there was no wind. It tinkled delicately and plaintively, as though it were made of glass; it seemed to feel the approach of Giaffar.

"Youth!"—said the old man, "pluck whichever of these fruits thou wilt, and know that if thou shalt pluck and eat the white one, thou shalt become more wise than all men; if thou shalt pluck and eat the red one, thou shalt become as rich as the Hebrew Rothschild; if thou shalt pluck and eat the yellow one, thou shalt please old women. Decide! . . . . and delay not. In an hour the fruits will fade, and the tree itself will sink into the dumb depths of the earth!"

Giaffar bowed his head and thought.—"What am I to do?" he articulated in a low tone, as though arguing with himself.—"If one becomes too wise, he will not wish to live, probably; if he becomes richer than all men, all will hate him; I would do better to pluck and eat the third, the shrivelled apple!"

And so he did; and the old man laughed a toothless laugh and said: "Oh, most wise youth! Thou hast chosen the good part!—What use hast thou for the white apple? Thou art wiser than Solomon as thou art.—And neither dost thou need the red apple. . . . Even without it thou shalt be rich. Only no one will be envious of thy wealth."

"Inform me, old man," said Giaffar, with a start, "where the respected mother of our God-saved Caliph dwelleth?"

The old man bowed to the earth, and pointed out the road to the youth.

Who in Bagdad doth not know the sun of the universe, the great, the celebrated Giaffar?

April, 1878.

## TWO FOUR-LINE STANZAS

THERE existed once a city whose inhabitants were so passionately fond of poetry that if several weeks passed and no beautiful new verses had

made their appearance they regarded that poetical dearth as a public calamity.

At such times they donned their worst garments, sprinkled ashes on their heads, and gathering in throngs on the public squares, they shed tears, and murmured bitterly against the Muse for having abandoned them.

On one such disastrous day the young poet Junius, presented himself on the square, filled to overflowing with the sorrowing populace.

With swift steps he ascended a specially-constructed tribune and made a sign that he wished to recite a poem.

The lictors immediately brandished their staves. "Silence! Attention!" they shouted in stentorian tones.

"Friends! Comrades!" began Junius, in a loud, but not altogether firm voice:

"Friends! Comrades! Ye lovers of verses!
Admirers of all that is graceful and fair!
Be not cast down by a moment of dark sadness!
The longed-for instant will come . . . . and light will disperse the gloom!" [1]

Junius ceased speaking . . . . and in reply to him, from all points of the square, clamour, whistling, and laughter arose.

All the faces turned toward him flamed with

[1] These lines do not rhyme in the original.—TRANSLATOR.

indignation, all eyes flashed with wrath, all hands were uplifted, menaced, were clenched into fists.

"A pretty thing he has thought to surprise us with!" roared angry voices. "Away from the tribune with the talentless rhymster! Away with the fool! Hurl rotten apples, bad eggs, at the empty-pated idiot! Give us stones! Fetch stones!"

Junius tumbled headlong from the tribune . . . . but before he had succeeded in fleeing to his own house, outbursts of rapturous applause, cries of laudation and shouts reached his ear.

Filled with amazement, but striving not to be detected (for it is dangerous to irritate an enraged wild beast), Junius returned to the square.

And what did he behold?

High above the throng, above its shoulders, on a flat gold shield, stood his rival, the young poet Julius, clad in a purple mantle, with a laurel wreath on his waving curls. . . . And the populace round about was roaring: "Glory! Glory! Glory to the immortal Julius! He hath comforted us in our grief, in our great woe! He hath given us verses sweeter than honey, more melodious than the cymbals, more fragrant than the rose, more pure than heaven's azure! Bear him in triumph; surround his inspired head with a soft billow of incense; refresh his brow with the waving of palm branches; lavish at his feet all the spices of Arabia! Glory!"

Junius approached one of the glorifiers.—"Inform me, O my fellow-townsman! With what verses hath Julius made you happy?—Alas, I was not on the square when he recited them! Repeat them, if thou canst recall them, I pray thee!"

"Such verses—and not recall them?" briskly replied the man interrogated.—"For whom dost thou take me? Listen—and rejoice, rejoice together with us!"

"'Ye lovers of verses!'—thus began the divine Julius . . . .

"'Ye lovers of verses! Comrades! Friends!
Admirers of all that is graceful, melodious, tender!
Be not cast down by a moment of heavy grief!
The longed-for moment will come—and day will chase away the night!'

"What dost thou think of that?"

"Good gracious!" roared Junius. "Why, those are my lines!—Julius must have been in the crowd when I recited them; he heard and repeated them, barely altering—and that, of course, not for the better—a few expressions!"

"Aha! Now I recognise thee. . . . Thou art Junius," retorted the citizen whom he had accosted, knitting his brows.—"Thou art either envious or a fool! . . . Only consider just one thing, unhappy man! Julius says in such lofty style: 'And day will chase away the night!'

. . . But with thee it is some nonsense or other: 'And the light will disperse the gloom!?'—What light?! What darkness?!"

"But is it not all one and the same thing . . . . " Junius was beginning. . . .

"Add one word more," the citizen interrupted him, "and I will shout to the populace, and it will rend thee asunder."

Junius prudently held his peace, but a grey-haired old man, who had overheard his conversation with the citizen, stepped up to the poor poet, and laying his hand on his shoulder, said:

"Junius! Thou hast said thy say at the wrong time; but the other man said his at the right time. —Consequently, he is in the right, while for thee there remain the consolations of thine own conscience."

But while his conscience was consoling Junius to the best of its ability,—and in a decidedly-unsatisfactory way, if the truth must be told,—far away, amid the thunder and patter of jubilation, in the golden dust of the all-conquering sun, gleaming with purple, darkling with laurel athwart the undulating streams of abundant incense, with majestic leisureliness, like an emperor marching to his empire, the proudly-erect figure of Julius moved forward with easy grace . . . . and long branches of the palm-tree bent in turn before him, as though expressing by their quiet rising, their submissive obeisance, that

incessantly-renewed adoration which filled to overflowing the hearts of his fellow-citizens whom he had enchanted!

April, 1878.

## THE SPARROW

I HAD returned from the chase and was walking along one of the alleys in the garden. My hound was running on in front of me.

Suddenly he retarded his steps and began to crawl stealthily along as though he detected game ahead.

I glanced down the alley and beheld a young sparrow, with a yellow ring around its beak and down on its head. It had fallen from the nest (the wind was rocking the trees of the alley violently), and sat motionless, impotently expanding its barely-sprouted little wings.

My hound was approaching it slowly when, suddenly wrenching itself from a neighbouring birch, an old black-breasted sparrow fell like a stone in front of my dog's very muzzle—and, with plumage all ruffled, contorted, with a despairing and pitiful cry, gave a couple of hops in the direction of the yawning jaws studded with big teeth.

It had flung itself down to save, it was shielding, its offspring . . . . but the whole of its tiny body was throbbing with fear, its voice was wild

and hoarse, it was swooning, it was sacrificing itself!

What a huge monster the dog must have appeared to it! And yet it could not have remained perched on its lofty, secure bough. . . . A force greater than its own will had hurled it thence.

My Trésor stopped short, retreated. . . . Evidently he recognised that force.

I hastened to call off the discomfited hound, and withdrew with reverence.

Yes; do not laugh. I felt reverential before that tiny, heroic bird, before its loving impulse.

Love, I thought, is stronger than death.—Only by it, only by love, does life support itself and move.

April, 1878.

## THE SKULLS

A SUMPTUOUS, luxuriously illuminated ballroom; a multitude of cavaliers and ladies.

All faces are animated, all speeches are brisk. . . . . A rattling conversation is in progress about a well-known songstress. The people are lauding her as divine, immortal. . . . Oh, how finely she had executed her last trill that evening!

And suddenly—as though at the wave of a magic wand—from all the heads, from all the faces, a thin shell of skin flew off, and instantly there was revealed the whiteness of skulls, the

naked gums and cheek-bones dimpled like bluish lead.

With horror did I watch those gums and cheek-bones moving and stirring,—those knobby, bony spheres turning this way and that, as they gleamed in the light of the lamps and candles, and smaller spheres—the spheres of the eyes bereft of sense—rolling in them.

I dared not touch my own face, I dared not look at myself in a mirror. But the skulls continued to turn this way and that, as before. . . . And with the same clatter as before, the brisk tongues, flashing like red rags from behind the grinning teeth, murmured on, how wonderfully, how incomparably the immortal . . . . yes, the immortal songstress had executed her last trill!

April, 1878.

## THE TOILER AND THE LAZY MAN

A CONVERSATION

THE TOILER

WHY dost thou bother us? What dost thou want? Thou art not one of us. . . Go away!

THE LAZY MAN[1]

I am one of you, brethren!

[1] "The white-handed man" would be the literal translation.—TRANSLATOR.

THE TOILER

Nothing of the sort; thou art not one of us! What an invention! Just look at my hands. Dost thou see how dirty they are? And they stink of dung, and tar,—while thy hands are white. And of what do they smell?

THE LAZY MAN—*offering his hands*

Smell.

THE TOILER—*smelling the hands*

What 's this? They seem to give off an odour of iron.

THE LAZY MAN

Iron it is. For the last six years I have worn fetters on them.

THE TOILER

And what was that for?

THE LAZY MAN

Because I was striving for your welfare, I wanted to liberate you, the coarse, uneducated people; I rebelled against your oppressors, I mutinied. . . . Well, and so they put me in prison.

THE TOILER

They put you in prison? It served you right for rebelling!

## *Two Years Later*

THE SAME TOILER TO ANOTHER TOILER

Hearken, Piótra! . . . Dost remember one of those white-handed lazy men was talking to thee the summer before last?

THE OTHER TOILER

I remember. . . . What of it?

FIRST TOILER

They 're going to hang him to-day, I hear; that 's the order which has been issued.

SECOND TOILER

Has he kept on rebelling?

FIRST TOILER

He has.

SECOND TOILER

Yes. . . . Well, see here, brother Mitry: can't we get hold of a bit of that rope with which they are going to hang him? Folks say that that brings the greatest good luck to a house.

FIRST TOILER

Thou 'rt right about that. We must try, brother Piótra.

April, 1878.

## THE ROSE

THE last days of August. . . . Autumn had already come.

The sun had set. A sudden, violent rain, without thunder and without lightning, had just swooped down upon our broad plain.

The garden in front of the house burned and smoked, all flooded with the heat of sunset and the deluge of rain.

She was sitting at a table in the drawing-room and staring with stubborn thoughtfulness into the garden, through the half-open door.

I knew what was going on then in her soul. I knew that after a brief though anguished conflict, she would that same instant yield to the feeling which she could no longer control.

Suddenly she rose, walked out briskly into the garden and disappeared.

One hour struck . . . . then another; she did not return.

Then I rose, and emerging from the house, I bent my steps to the alley down which—I had no doubt as to that—she had gone.

Everything had grown dark round about; night had already descended. But on the damp sand of the path, gleaming scarlet amid the encircling gloom, a rounded object was visible.

I bent down. It was a young, barely-budded rose. Two hours before I had seen that same rose on her breast.

I carefully picked up the flower which had fallen in the mire, and returning to the drawing-room, I laid it on the table, in front of her arm-chair.

And now, at last, she returned, and traversing the whole length of the room with her light footsteps, she seated herself at the table.

Her face had grown pale and animated; swiftly, with merry confusion, her lowered eyes, which seemed to have grown smaller, darted about in all directions.

She caught sight of the rose, seized it, glanced at its crumpled petals, glanced at me—and her eyes, coming to a sudden halt, glittered with tears.

"What are you weeping about?" I asked.

"Why, here, about this rose. Look what has happened to it."

At this point I took it into my head to display profundity of thought.

"Your tears will wash away the mire," I said with a significant expression.

"Tears do not wash, tears scorch," she replied, and, turning toward the fireplace, she tossed the flower into the expiring flame.

"The fire will scorch it still better than tears," she exclaimed, not without audacity,—and her

beautiful eyes, still sparkling with tears, laughed boldly and happily.

I understood that she had been scorched also.

April, 1878.

## IN MEMORY OF J. P. VRÉVSKY

In the mire, on damp, stinking straw, under the pent-house of an old carriage-house which had been hastily converted into a field military hospital in a ruined Bulgarian hamlet, she had been for more than a fortnight dying of typhus fever.

She was unconscious—and not a single physician had even glanced at her; the sick soldiers whom she had nursed as long as she could keep on her feet rose by turns from their infected lairs, in order to raise to her parched lips a few drops of water in a fragment of a broken jug.

She was young, handsome; high society knew her; even dignitaries inquired about her. The ladies envied her, the men courted her . . . . two or three men loved her secretly and profoundly. Life smiled upon her; but there are smiles which are worse than tears.

A tender, gentle heart . . . . and such strength, such a thirst for sacrifice! To help those who needed help . . . . she knew no other happiness . . . . she knew no other and she tasted no other. Every other happiness passed her by. But she had long since become reconciled to that, and all

flaming with the fire of inextinguishable faith, she dedicated herself to the service of her fellow-men. What sacred treasures she held hidden there, in the depths of her soul, in her own secret recesses, no one ever knew—and now no one will ever know.

And to what end? The sacrifice has been made . . . . the deed is done.

But it is sorrowful to think that no one said "thank you" even to her corpse, although she herself was ashamed of and shunned all thanks.

May her dear shade be not offended by this tardy blossom, which I venture to lay upon her grave!

September, 1878.

## THE LAST MEETING

We were once close, intimate friends. . . . But there came an evil moment and we parted like enemies.

Many years passed. . . . And lo! on entering the town where he lived I learned that he was hopelessly ill, and wished to see me.

I went to him, I entered his chamber. . . . Our glances met.

I hardly recognised him. O God! How disease had changed him!

Yellow, shrivelled, with his head completely bald, and a narrow, grey beard, he was sitting in

nothing but a shirt, cut out expressly. . . . He could not bear the pressure of the lightest garment. Abruptly he extended to me his frightfully-thin hand, which looked as though it had been gnawed away, with an effort whispered several incomprehensible words—whether of welcome or of reproach, who knows? His exhausted chest heaved; over the contracted pupils of his small, inflamed eyes two scanty tears of martyrdom flowed down.

My heart sank within me. . . . I sat down on a chair beside him, and involuntarily dropping my eyes in the presence of that horror and deformity, I also put out my hand.

But it seemed to me that it was not his hand which grasped mine.

It seemed to me as though there were sitting between us a tall, quiet, white woman. A long veil enveloped her from head to foot. Her deep, pale eyes gazed nowhere; her pale, stern lips uttered no sound. . . .

That woman joined our hands. . . . She reconciled us forever.

Yes. . . . It was Death who had reconciled us. . . .

April, 1878.

## THE VISIT

I WAS sitting at the open window . . . . in the morning, early in the morning, on the first of May.

The flush of dawn had not yet begun; but the dark, warm night was already paling, already growing chill.

No fog had risen, no breeze was straying, everything was of one hue and silent . . . . but one could scent the approach of the awakening, and in the rarefied air the scent of the dew's harsh dampness was abroad.

Suddenly, into my chamber, through the open window, flew a large bird, lightly tinkling and rustling.

I started, looked more intently. . . . It was not a bird: it was a tiny, winged woman, clad in a long, close-fitting robe which billowed out at the bottom.

She was all grey, the hue of mother-of-pearl; only the inner side of her wings glowed with a tender flush of scarlet, like a rose bursting into blossom; a garland of lilies-of-the-valley confined the scattered curls of her small, round head,—and two peacock feathers quivered amusingly, like the feelers of a butterfly, above the fair, rounded little forehead.

She floated past a couple of times close to the

ceiling: her tiny face was laughing; laughing also were her huge, black, luminous eyes. The merry playfulness of her capricious flight shivered their diamond rays.

She held in her hand a long frond of a steppe flower—"Imperial sceptre"[1] the Russian folk call it; and it does, indeed, resemble a sceptre.

As she flew rapidly above me she touched my head with that flower.

I darted toward her. . . . But she had already fluttered through the window, and away she flew headlong. . . .

In the garden, in the wilderness of the lilac-bushes, a turtle-dove greeted her with its first cooing; and at the spot where she had vanished the milky-white sky flushed a soft crimson.

I recognised thee, goddess of fancy! Thou hast visited me by accident—thou hast flown in to young poets.

O poetry! O youth! O virginal beauty of woman! Only for an instant can ye gleam before me,—in the early morning of the early spring!

May, 1878.

## NECESSITAS—VIS—LIBERTAS

### A BAS-RELIEF

A TALL, bony old woman with an iron face and a dull, impassive gaze is walking along with great

[1] The pretty name for what we call mullein.—TRANSLATOR.

strides, and pushing before her, with her hand as harsh as a stick, another woman.

This woman, of vast size, powerful, corpulent, with the muscles of a Hercules, and a tiny head on a bull-like neck—and blind—is pushing on in her turn a small, thin young girl.

This girl alone has eyes which see; she resists, turns backward, elevates her thin red arms; her animated countenance expresses impatience and hardihood. . . . She does not wish to obey, she does not wish to advance in the direction whither she is being impelled . . . . and, nevertheless, she must obey and advance.

*Necessitas—Vis—Libertas:*

Whoever likes may interpret this.

May, 1878.

## ALMS

In the vicinity of a great city, on the broad, much-travelled road, an aged, ailing man was walking.

He was staggering as he went; his emaciated legs, entangling themselves, trailing and stumbling, trod heavily and feebly, exactly as though they belonged to some one else; his clothing hung on him in rags; his bare head drooped upon his breast. . . . He was exhausted.

He squatted down on a stone by the side of the road, bent forward, propped his elbows on his

knees, covered his face with both hands, and between his crooked fingers the tears dripped on the dry, grey dust.

He was remembering. . . .

He remembered how he had once been healthy and rich,—and how he had squandered his health, and distributed his wealth to others, friends and enemies. . . . And lo! now he had not a crust of bread, and every one had abandoned him, his friends even more promptly than his enemies. . . . Could he possibly humble himself to the point of asking alms? And he felt bitter and ashamed at heart.

And the tears still dripped and dripped, mottling the grey dust.

Suddenly he heard some one calling him by name. He raised his weary head and beheld in front of him a stranger: a face calm and dignified, but not stern; eyes not beaming, but bright; a gaze penetrating, but not evil.

"Thou hast given away all thy wealth," an even voice made itself heard. . . . "But surely thou art not regretting that thou hast done good?"

"I do not regret it," replied the old man, with a sigh, "only here am I dying now."

"And if there had been no beggars in the world to stretch out their hands to thee," pursued the stranger, "thou wouldst have had no one to whom to show thy beneficence; thou

wouldst not have been able to exercise thyself therein?"

The old man made no reply, and fell into thought.

"Therefore, be not proud now, my poor man," spoke up the stranger again. "Go, stretch out thy hand, afford to other good people the possibility of proving by their actions that they are good."

The old man started, and raised his eyes . . . . but the stranger had already vanished,—but far away, on the road, a wayfarer made his appearance.

The old man approached him, and stretched out his hand.—The wayfarer turned away with a surly aspect and gave him nothing.

But behind him came another, and this one gave the old man a small alms.

And the old man bought bread for himself with the copper coins which had been given him, and sweet did the bit which he had begged seem to him, and there was no shame in his heart—but, on the contrary, a tranquil joy overshadowed him.

May, 1878.

## THE INSECT

I DREAMED that a score of us were sitting in a large room with open windows.

Among us were women, children, old men. . . .

We were all talking about some very unfamiliar subject—talking noisily and unintelligibly.

Suddenly, with a harsh clatter, a huge insect, about three inches and a half long, flew into the room . . . . flew in, circled about and alighted on the wall.

It resembled a fly or a wasp.—Its body was of a dirty hue; its flat, hard wings were of the same colour; it had extended, shaggy claws and a big, angular head, like that of a dragon-fly; and that head and the claws were bright red, as though bloody.

This strange insect kept incessantly turning its head downward, upward, to the right, to the left, and moving its claws about . . . . then suddenly it wrested itself from the wall, flew clattering through the room,—and again alighted, again began to move in terrifying and repulsive manner, without stirring from the spot. It evoked in all of us disgust, alarm, even terror. . . . None of us had ever seen anything of the sort; we all cried: "Expel that monster!" We all flourished our handkerchiefs at it from a distance . . . . for no one could bring himself to approach it . . . . and when the insect had flown in we had all involuntarily got out of the way.

Only one of our interlocutors, a pale-faced man who was still young, surveyed us all with surprise.—He shrugged his shoulders, he smiled, he positively could not understand what had hap-

pened to us and why we were so agitated. He had seen no insect, he had not heard the ominous clatter of its wings.

Suddenly the insect seemed to rivet its attention on him, soared into the air, and swooping down upon his head, stung him on the brow, a little above the eyes. . . . The young man emitted a faint cry and fell dead.

The dreadful fly immediately flew away. . . . Only then did we divine what sort of a visitor we had had.

May, 1878.

## CABBAGE-SOUP

THE son of a widowed peasant-woman died—a young fellow aged twenty, the best labourer in the village.

The lady-proprietor of that village, on learning of the peasant-woman's affliction, went to call upon her on the very day of the funeral.

She found her at home.

Standing in the middle of her cottage, in front of the table, she was ladling out empty [1] cabbage-soup from the bottom of a smoke-begrimed pot, in a leisurely way, with her right hand (her left hung limply by her side), and swallowing spoonful after spoonful.

The woman's face had grown sunken and dark; her eyes were red and swollen . . . . but she car-

[1] That is, made without meat.—TRANSLATOR.

ried herself independently and uprightly, as in church.[1]

"O Lord!" thought the lady; "she can eat at such a moment . . . . but what coarse feelings they have!"

And then the lady-mistress recalled how, when she had lost her own little daughter, aged nine months, a few years before, she had refused, out of grief, to hire a very beautiful villa in the vicinity of Petersburg, and had passed the entire summer in town!—But the peasant-woman continued to sip her cabbage-soup.

At last the lady could endure it no longer.—"Tatyána!" said she. . . . "Good gracious!—I am amazed! Is it possible that thou didst not love thy son? How is it that thy appetite has not disappeared?—How canst thou eat that cabbage-soup?"

"My Vásya is dead," replied the woman softly, and tears of suffering again began to stream down her sunken cheeks,—"and, of course, my own end has come also: my head has been taken away from me while I am still alive. But the cabbage-soup must not go to waste; for it is salted."

The lady-mistress merely shrugged her shoulders and went away. She got salt cheaply.

May, 1878.

[1] The ideal bearing in church is described as standing "like a candle"; that is, very straight and motionless.—TRANSLATOR.

## THE AZURE REALM

O AZURE realm! O realm of azure, light, youth, and happiness! I have beheld thee . . . . in my dreams.

There were several of us in a beautiful, decorated boat. Like the breast of a swan the white sail towered aloft beneath fluttering pennants.

I did not know who my companions were; but with all my being I felt that they were as young, as merry, as happy as I was!

And I paid no heed to them. All about me I beheld only the shoreless azure sea, all covered with a fine rippling of golden scales, and overhead an equally shoreless azure sea, and in it, triumphantly and, as it were, smilingly, rolled on the friendly sun.

And among us, from time to time, there arose laughter, ringing and joyous as the laughter of the gods!

Or suddenly, from some one's lips, flew forth words, verses replete with wondrous beauty and with inspired power . . . . so that it seemed as though the very sky resounded in reply to them, and round about the sea throbbed with sympathy. . . . And then blissful silence began again.

Diving lightly through the soft waves, our swift boat glided on. It was not propelled by the

breeze; it was ruled by our own sportive hearts. Whithersoever we wished, thither did it move, obediently, as though it were gifted with life.

We encountered islands, magical, half-transparent islands with the hues of precious stones, jacinths and emeralds. Intoxicating perfumes were wafted from the surrounding shores; some of these islands pelted us with a rain of white roses and lilies-of-the-valley; from others there rose up suddenly long-winged birds, clothed in rainbow hues.

The birds circled over our heads, the lilies and roses melted in the pearly foam, which slipped along the smooth sides of our craft.

In company with the flowers and the birds, sweet, sweet sounds were wafted to our ears. . . . We seemed to hear women's voices in them. . . . And everything round about,—the sky, the sea, the bellying of the sail up aloft, the purling of the waves at the stern,—everything spoke of love, of blissful love.

And she whom each one of us loved—she was there . . . . invisibly and near at hand. Yet another moment and lo! her eyes would beam forth, her smile would blossom out. . . . Her hand would grasp thy hand, and draw thee after her into an unfading paradise!

O azure realm! I have beheld thee . . . . in my dream!

June, 1878.

## TWO RICH MEN

WHEN men in my presence extol Rothschild, who out of his vast revenues allots whole thousands for the education of children, the cure of the sick, the care of the aged, I laud and melt in admiration.

But while I laud and melt I cannot refrain from recalling a poverty-stricken peasant's family which received an orphaned niece into its wretched, tumble-down little hovel.

"If we take Kátka," said the peasant-woman; "we shall spend our last kopéks on her, and there will be nothing left wherewith to buy salt for our porridge."

"But we will take her . . . . and unsalted porridge," replied the peasant-man, her husband.

Rothschild is a long way behind that peasant-man!

July, 1878.

## THE OLD MAN

THE dark, distressing days have come. . . .

*One's own* maladies, the ailments of those dear to him, cold and the gloom of old age. Everything which thou hast loved, to which thou hast surrendered thyself irrevocably, collapses and falls into ruins. The road has taken a turn down hill.

But what is to be done? Grieve? Lament? Thou wilt help neither thyself nor others in that way. . . .

On the withered, bent tree the foliage is smaller, more scanty—but the verdure is the same as ever.

Do thou also shrivel up, retire into thyself, into thy memories, and there, deep, very deep within, at the very bottom of thy concentrated soul, thy previous life, accessible to thee alone, will shine forth before thee with its fragrant, still fresh verdure, and the caress and strength of the springtime!

But have a care . . . . do not look ahead, poor old man!

July, 1878.

## THE CORRESPONDENT

Two friends are sitting at a table and drinking tea.

A sudden noise has arisen in the street. Plaintive moans, violent oaths, outbursts of malicious laughter have become audible.

"Some one is being beaten," remarked one of the friends, after having cast a glance out of the window.

"A criminal? A murderer?" inquired the other.—"See here, no matter who it is, such chas-

tisement without trial is not to be tolerated. Let us go and defend him."

"But it is not a murderer who is being beaten."

"Not a murderer? A thief, then? Never mind, let us go, let us rescue him from the mob."

"It is not a thief, either."

"Not a thief? Is it, then, a cashier, a railway employee, an army contractor, a Russian Mæcenas, a lawyer, a well-intentioned editor, a public philanthropist? . . . At any rate, let us go, let us aid him!"

"No . . . . they are thrashing a correspondent."

"A correspondent?—Well, see here now, let 's drink a glass of tea first."

July, 1878.

## TWO BROTHERS

It was a vision. . . .

Two angels presented themselves before me . . . . two spirits.

I say angels . . . . spirits, because neither of them had any garments on their naked bodies, and from the shoulders of both sprang long, powerful wings.

Both are youths. One is rather plump, smooth of skin, with black curls. He has languishing brown eyes with thick eyelashes; his gaze is ingratiating, cheerful, and eager. A charming,

captivating countenance a trifle bold, a trifle malicious. His full red lips tremble slightly. The youth smiles like one who has authority,—confidently and lazily; a sumptuous garland of flowers rests lightly on his shining hair, almost touching his velvet eyebrows. The spotted skin of a leopard, pinned with a golden dart, hangs lightly from his plump shoulders down upon his curving hips. The feathers of his wings gleam with changeable tints of rose-colour; their tips are of a brilliant red, just as though they had been dipped in fresh, crimson blood. From time to time they palpitate swiftly, with a pleasant silvery sound, the sound of rain in springtime.

The other is gaunt and yellow of body. His ribs are faintly discernible at every breath. His hair is fair, thin, straight; his eyes are huge, round, pale grey in colour . . . . his gaze is uneasy and strangely bright. All his features are sharp-cut: his mouth is small, half open, with fish-like teeth; his nose is solid, aquiline; his chin projecting, covered with a whitish down. Those thin lips have never once smiled.

It is a regular, terrible, pitiless face! Moreover, the face of the first youth,—of the beauty,—although it is sweet and charming, does not express any compassion either. Around the head of the second are fastened a few empty, broken ears of grain intertwined with withered blades of grass. A coarse grey fabric encircles his

loins; the wings at his back, of a dull, dark-blue colour, wave softly and menacingly.

Both youths appeared to be inseparable companions.

Each leaned on the other's shoulder. The soft little hand of the first rested like a cluster of grapes on the harsh collar-bone of the second; the slender, bony hand of the second, with its long, thin fingers, lay outspread, like a serpent, on the womanish breast of the first.

And I heard a voice. This is what it uttered:

"Before thee stand Love and Hunger—own brothers, the two fundamental bases of everything living.

"Everything which lives moves, for the purpose of obtaining food; and eats, for the purpose of reproducing itself.

"Love and Hunger have one and the same object; it is necessary that life should not cease, —one's own life and the life of others are the same thing, the universal life."

August, 1878.

## THE EGOIST

He possessed everything which was requisite to make him the scourge of his family.

He had been born healthy, he had been born rich—and during the whole course of his long life he had remained rich and healthy; he had never

committed a single crime; he had never stumbled into any blunder; he had not made a single slip of the tongue or mistake.

He was irreproachably honest! . . . And proud in the consciousness of his honesty, he crushed every one with it: relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

His honesty was his capital . . . . and he exacted usurious interest from it.

Honesty gave him the right to be pitiless and not to do any good deed which was not prescribed; —and he was pitiless, and he did no good . . . . because good except by decree is not good.

He never troubled himself about any one, except his own very exemplary self, and he was genuinely indignant if others did not take equally assiduous care of it!

And, at the same time, he did not consider himself an egoist, and upbraided and persecuted egoists and egoism more than anything else!— Of course! Egoism in other people interfered with his own.

Not being conscious of a single failing, he did not understand, he did not permit, a weakness in any one else. Altogether, he did not understand anybody or anything, for he was completely surrounded by himself on all sides, above and below, behind and before.

He did not even understand the meaning of forgiveness. He never had had occasion to for-

give himself. . . . Then how was he to forgive others?

Before the bar of his own conscience, before the face of his own God, he, that marvel, that monster of virtue, rolled up his eyes, and in a firm, clear voice uttered: "Yes; I am a worthy, a moral man!"

He repeated these words on his death-bed, and nothing quivered even then in his stony heart,—in that heart devoid of a fleck or a crack.

O monstrosity of self-satisfied, inflexible, cheaply-acquired virtue—thou art almost more repulsive than the undisguised monstrosity of vice!

December, 1878.

## THE SUPREME BEING'S FEAST

ONE day the Supreme Being took it into his head to give a great feast in his azure palace.

He invited all the virtues as guests. Only the virtues . . . . he invited no men . . . . only ladies.

Very many of them assembled, great and small. The petty virtues were more agreeable and courteous than the great ones; but all seemed well pleased, and chatted politely among themselves, as befits near relatives and friends.

But lo! the Supreme Being noticed two very

beautiful ladies who, apparently, were entirely unacquainted with each other.

The host took one of these ladies by the hand and led her to the other.

"Beneficence!" said he, pointing to the first.

"Gratitude!" he added, pointing to the second.

The two virtues were unspeakably astonished; ever since the world has existed—and it has existed a long time—they had never met before.

December, 1878.

## THE SPHINX

YELLOWISH-GREY, friable at the top, firm below, creaking sand . . . . sand without end, no matter in which direction one gazes!

And above this sand, above this sea of dead dust, the huge head of the Egyptian Sphinx rears itself aloft.

What is it that those vast, protruding lips, those impassively-dilated, up-turned nostrils, and those eyes, those long, half-sleepy, half-watchful eyes, beneath the double arch of the lofty brows, are trying to say?

For they are trying to say something! They even speak—but only Œdipus can solve the riddle and understand their mute speech.

Bah! Yes, I recognise those features . . . . there is nothing Egyptian about the low white

forehead, the prominent cheek-bones, the short, straight nose, the fine mouth with its white teeth, the soft moustache and curling beard,—and those small eyes set far apart . . . . and on the head the cap of hair furrowed with a parting. . . . Why, it is thou, Karp, Sídor, Semyón, thou petty peasant of Yaroslávl, or of Ryazán, my fellow-countryman, the kernel of Russia! Is it long since thou didst become the Sphinx?

Or dost thou also wish to say something? Yes; and thou also art a Sphinx.

And thy eyes—those colourless but profound eyes—speak also. . . . And their speeches are equally dumb and enigmatic.

Only where is thine Œdipus?

Alas! 'T is not sufficient to don a cap to become thine Œdipus, O Sphinx of All the Russias!

December, 1878.

## NYMPHS

I was standing in front of a chain of beautiful mountains spread out in a semi-circle; the young, verdant forest clothed them from summit to base. The southern sky hung transparently blue above us; on high the sun beamed radiantly; below, half hidden in the grass, nimble brooks were babbling.

And there recurred to my mind an ancient

legend about how, in the first century after the birth of Christ, a Grecian ship was sailing over the Ægean Sea.

It was midday. . . . The weather was calm. And suddenly, high up, over the head of the helmsman, some one uttered distinctly: "When thou shalt sail past the islands, cry in a loud voice, 'Great Pan is dead!'"

The helmsman was amazed . . . . and frightened. But when the ship ran past the islands he called out: "Great Pan is dead!"

And thereupon, immediately, in answer to his shout, along the whole length of the shore (for the island was uninhabited), there resounded loud sobbing groans, prolonged wailing cries: "He is dead! Great Pan is dead!"

This legend recurred to my mind . . . . and a strange thought flashed across my brain.—"What if I were to shout that call?"

But in view of the exultation which surrounded me I could not think of death, and with all the force at my command I shouted: "He is risen! Great Pan is risen!"

And instantly,—oh, marvel!—in reply to my exclamation, along the whole wide semi-circle of verdant mountains there rolled a vigorous laughter, there arose a joyous chattering and splashing. "He is risen! Pan is risen!" rustled youthful voices.—Everything there in front of me suddenly broke into laughter more brilliant than the

sun on high, more sportive than the brooks which were babbling beneath the grass. The hurried tramp of light footsteps became audible; athwart the green grove flitted the marble whiteness of waving tunics, the vivid scarlet of naked bodies. . . . . It was nymphs, nymphs, dryads, bacchantes, running down from the heights into the plain. . . .

They made their appearance simultaneously along all the borders of the forest. Curls fluttered on divine heads, graceful arms uplifted garlands and cymbals, and laughter, sparkling, Olympian laughter, rippled and rolled among them. . . .

In front floats a goddess. She is taller and handsomer than all the rest;—on her shoulders is a quiver; in her hands is a bow; upon her curls, caught high, is the silvery sickle of the moon. . . .

Diana, is it thou?

But suddenly the goddess halted . . . . and immediately, following her example, all the nymphs came to a halt also. The ringing laughter died away. I saw how the face of the goddess, suddenly rendered dumb, became covered with a deathly pallor; I saw how her feet grew petrified, how inexpressible terror parted her lips, strained wide her eyes, which were fixed on the remote distance. . . . What had she descried? Where was she gazing?

I turned in the direction in which she was gazing. . . .

At the very edge of the sky, beyond the low line of the fields, a golden cross was blazing like a spark of fire on the white belfry of a Christian church. . . . The goddess had caught sight of that cross.

I heard behind me a long, uneven sigh, like the throbbing of a broken harp-string,—and when I turned round again, no trace of the nymphs remained. . . . The broad forest gleamed green as before, and only in spots, athwart the close network of the branches, could tufts of something white be seen melting away. Whether these were the tunics of the nymphs, or a vapour was rising up from the bottom of the valley, I know not.

But how I regretted the vanished goddesses!

December, 1878.

## ENEMY AND FRIEND

A CAPTIVE condemned to perpetual incarceration broke out of prison and started to run at a headlong pace. . . . After him, on his very heels, darted the pursuit.

He ran with all his might. . . . His pursuers began to fall behind.

But lo! in front of him was a river with steep

banks,—a narrow, but deep river. . . . And he did not know how to swim!

From one shore to the other a thin, rotten board had been thrown. The fugitive had already set foot upon it. . . . But it so happened that just at this point, beside the river, his best friend and his most cruel enemy were standing.

The enemy said nothing and merely folded his arms; on the other hand, the friend shouted at the top of his voice:—"Good heavens! What art thou doing? Come to thy senses, thou madman! Dost thou not see that the board is completely rotten?—It will break beneath thy weight, and thou wilt infallibly perish!"

"But there is no other way of crossing . . . . and hearest thou the pursuit?" groaned in desperation the unhappy wight, as he stepped upon the board.

"I will not permit it! . . . . No, I will not permit thee to perish!"—roared his zealous friend, snatching the plank from beneath the feet of the fugitive.—The latter instantly tumbled headlong into the tumultuous waters—and was drowned.

The enemy smiled with satisfaction, and went his way; but the friend sat down on the shore and began to weep bitterly over his poor . . . . poor friend!

"He would not heed me! He would not heed me!" he whispered dejectedly.

"However!" he said at last. "He would have been obliged to languish all his life in that frightful prison! At all events, he is not suffering now! Now he is better off! Evidently, so had his Fate decreed!

"And yet, it is a pity, from a human point of view!"

And the good soul continued to sob inconsolably over his unlucky friend.

December, 1878.

## CHRIST

I saw myself as a youth, almost a little boy, in a low-ceiled country church.—Slender wax tapers burned like red spots in front of the ancient holy pictures.

An aureole of rainbow hues encircled each tiny flame.—It was dark and dim in the church. . . . But a mass of people stood in front of me.

All reddish, peasant heads. From time to time they would begin to surge, to fall, to rise again, like ripe ears of grain when the summer breeze flits across them in a slow wave.

Suddenly some man or other stepped from behind and took up his stand alongside me.

I did not turn toward him, but I immediately felt that that man was—Christ.

Emotion, curiosity, awe took possession of me

simultaneously. I forced myself to look at my neighbour.

He had a face like that of everybody else,—a face similar to all human faces. His eyes gazed slightly upward, attentively and gently. His lips were closed, but not compressed; the upper lip seemed to rest upon the lower; his small beard was parted in the middle. His hands were clasped, and did not move. And his garments were like those of every one else.

"Christ, forsooth!" I thought to myself. "Such a simple, simple man! It cannot be!"

I turned away.—But before I had time to turn my eyes from that simple man it again seemed to me that it was Christ in person who was standing beside me.

Again I exerted an effort over myself. . . . And again I beheld the same face, resembling all human faces, the same ordinary, although unfamiliar, features.

And suddenly dread fell upon me, and I came to myself. Only then did I understand that precisely such a face—a face like all human faces—is the face of Christ.

December, 1878.

## II

### 1879–1882

## THE STONE

HAVE you seen an old, old stone on the sea-shore, when the brisk waves are beating upon it from all sides, at high tide, on a sunny spring day —beating and sparkling and caressing it, and drenching its mossy head with crumbling pearls of glittering foam?

The stone remains the same stone, but brilliant colours start forth upon its surly exterior.

They bear witness to that distant time when the molten granite was only just beginning to harden and was all glowing with fiery hues.

Thus also did young feminine souls recently attack my old heart from all quarters,—and beneath their caressing touch it glowed once more with colours which faded long ago,—with traces of its pristine fire!

The waves have retreated . . . . but the colours have not yet grown dim, although a keen breeze is drying them.

May, 1879.

## DOVES

I WAS standing on the crest of a sloping hill; in front of me lay outspread, and motley of hue,

the ripe rye, now like a golden, again like a silvery sea.

But no surge was coursing across this sea; no sultry breeze was blowing; a great thunder-storm was brewing.

Round about me the sun was still shining hotly and dimly; but in the distance, beyond the rye, not too far away, a dark-blue thunder-cloud lay in a heavy mass over one half of the horizon.

Everything was holding its breath .... everything was languishing beneath the ominous gleam of the sun's last rays. Not a single bird was to be seen or heard; even the sparrows had hidden themselves. Only somewhere, close at hand, a solitary huge leaf of burdock was whispering and flapping.

How strongly the wormwood on the border-strips [1] smells! I glanced at the blue mass .... and confusion ensued in my soul. "Well, be quick, then, be quick!" I thought. "Flash out, ye golden serpent! Rumble, ye thunder! Move on, advance, discharge thy water, thou evil thunder-cloud; put an end to this painful torment!"

But the storm-cloud did not stir. As before, it continued to crush the dumb earth .... and seemed merely to wax larger and darker.

And lo! through its bluish monotony there flashed something smooth and even; precisely like a white handkerchief, or a snowball. It was a

[1] Strips of grass left as boundaries between the tilled fields allotted to different peasants.—TRANSLATOR.

white dove flying from the direction of the village.

It flew, and flew onward, always straight onward . . . . and vanished behind the forest.

Several moments passed—the same cruel silence still reigned. . . . But behold! Now *two* handkerchiefs are fluttering, *two* snowballs are floating back; it is *two* white doves wending their way homeward in even flight.

And now, at last, the storm has broken loose—and the fun begins!

I could hardly reach home.—The wind shrieked and darted about like a mad thing; low-hanging rusty-hued clouds swirled onward, as though rent in bits; everything whirled, got mixed up, lashed and rocked with the slanting columns of the furious downpour; the lightning flashes blinded with their fiery green hue; abrupt claps of thunder were discharged like cannon; there was a smell of sulphur. . . .

But under the eaves, on the very edge of a garret window, side by side sit the two white doves,—the one which flew after its companion, and the one which it brought and, perhaps, saved.

Both have ruffled up their plumage, and each feels with its wing the wing of its neighbour. . . .

It is well with them! And it is well with me as I gaze at them. . . Although I am alone . . . . alone, as always.

May, 1879.

## TO-MORROW! TO-MORROW!

How empty, and insipid, and insignificant is almost every day which we have lived through! How few traces it leaves behind it! In what a thoughtlessly-stupid manner have those hours flown past, one after another!

And, nevertheless, man desires to exist; he prizes life, he hopes in it, in himself, in the future. . . . Oh, what blessings he expects from the future!

And why does he imagine that other future days will not resemble the one which has just passed?

But he does not imagine this. On the whole, he is not fond of thinking—and it is well that he does not.

"There, now, to-morrow, to-morrow!" he comforts himself—until that "to-morrow" overthrows him into the grave.

Well—and once in the grave,—one ceases, willy-nilly, to think.

May, 1879.

## NATURE

I DREAMED that I had entered a vast subterranean chamber with a lofty, arched roof. It was completely filled by some sort of even light, also subterranean.

In the very centre of the chamber sat a majestic woman in a flowing robe green in hue. With her head bowed on her hand, she seemed to be immersed in profound meditation.

I immediately understood that this woman was Nature itself,—and reverent awe pierced my soul with an instantaneous chill.

I approached the seated woman, and making a respectful obeisance, "O our common mother," I exclaimed, "what is the subject of thy meditation? Art thou pondering the future destinies of mankind? As to how it is to attain the utmost possible perfection and bliss?"

The woman slowly turned her dark, lowering eyes upon me. Her lips moved, and a stentorian voice, like unto the clanging of iron, rang out:

"I am thinking how I may impart more power to the muscles in the legs of a flea, so that it may more readily escape from its enemies. The equilibrium of attack and defence has been destroyed. . . . It must be restored."

"What!" I stammered, in reply.—"So that is what thou art thinking about? But are not we men thy favourite children?"

The woman knit her brows almost imperceptibly.—"All creatures are my children," she said, "and I look after all of them alike,—and I annihilate them in identically the same way."

"But good . . . . reason . . . . justice . . . ." I stammered again.

"Those are the words of men," rang out the iron voice. "I know neither good nor evil. . . . Reason is no law to me—and what is justice?—I have given thee life,—I take it away and give it to others; whether worms or men . . . . it makes no difference to me. . . . But in the meantime, do thou defend thyself, and hinder me not!"

I was about to answer . . . . but the earth round about me uttered a dull groan and trembled—and I awoke.

August, 1879.

## "HANG HIM!"

"It happened in the year 1803," began my old friend, "not long before Austerlitz. The regiment of which I was an officer was quartered in Moravia.

"We were strictly forbidden to harry and oppress the inhabitants; and they looked askance on us as it was, although we were regarded as allies.

"I had an orderly, a former serf of my mother's, Egór by name. He was an honest and peaceable fellow; I had known him from his childhood and treated him like a friend.

"One day, in the house where I dwelt, abusive shrieks and howls arose: the housewife had been robbed of two hens, and she accused my

orderly of the theft. He denied it, and called upon me to bear witness whether 'he, Egór Avtamónoff, would steal!' I assured the housewife of Egór's honesty, but she would listen to nothing.

"Suddenly the energetic trampling of horses' hoofs resounded along the street: it was the Commander-in-Chief himself riding by with his staff. He was proceeding at a foot-pace,—a fat, pot-bellied man, with drooping head and epaulets dangling on his breast.

"The housewife caught sight of him, and flinging herself across his horse's path, she fell on her knees and, all distraught, with head uncovered, began loudly to complain of my orderly, pointing to him with her hand:

"'Sir General!' she shrieked. 'Your Radiance! Judge! Help! Save! This soldier has robbed me!'

"Egór was standing on the threshold of the house, drawn up in military salute, with his cap in his hand,—and had even protruded his breast and turned out his feet, like a sentry,—and not a word did he utter! Whether he was daunted by all that mass of generals halting there in the middle of the street, or whether he was petrified in the presence of the calamity which had overtaken him,—at any rate, there stood my Egór blinking his eyes, and white as clay!

"The Commander-in-Chief cast an abstracted

and surly glance at him, bellowing wrathfully: 'Well, what hast thou to say?' . . . . Egór stood like a statue and showed his teeth! If looked at in profile, it was exactly as though the man were laughing.

"Then the Commander-in-Chief said abruptly: 'Hang him!'—gave his horse a dig in the ribs and rode on, first at a foot-pace, as before, then at a brisk trot. The whole staff dashed after him; only one adjutant, turning round in his saddle, took a close look at Egór.

"It was impossible to disobey. . . . Egór was instantly seized and led to execution.

"Thereupon he turned deadly pale, and only exclaimed a couple of times, with difficulty, 'Good heavens! Good heavens!'—and then, in a low voice—'God sees it was not I!'

"He wept bitterly, very bitterly, as he bade me farewell. I was in despair.—'Egór! Egór!' I cried, 'why didst thou say nothing to the general?'

"'God sees it was not I,' repeated the poor fellow, sobbing.—The housewife herself was horrified. She had not in the least expected such a dreadful verdict, and fell to shrieking in her turn. She began to entreat each and all to spare him, she declared that her hens had been found, that she was prepared to explain everything herself. . . .

"Of course, this was of no use whatsoever.

Military regulations, sir! Discipline!—The housewife sobbed more and more loudly.

"Egór, whom the priest had already confessed and communicated, turned to me:

"'Tell her, Your Well-Born, that she must not do herself an injury. . . . For I have already forgiven her.'"

As my friend repeated these last words of his servant, he whispered: "Egórushka[1] darling, just man!"—and the tears dripped down his aged cheeks.

August, 1879.

## WHAT SHALL I THINK? . . . .

What shall I think when I come to die,—if I am then in a condition to think?

Shall I think what a bad use I have made of my life, how I have dozed it through, how I have not known how to relish its gifts?

"What? Is this death already? So soon? Impossible! Why, I have not succeeded in accomplishing anything yet. . . . I have only been preparing to act!"

Shall I recall the past, pause over the thought of the few bright moments I have lived through, over beloved images and faces?

Will my evil deeds present themselves before

[1] The affectionate diminutive.—Translator.

my memory, and will the corrosive grief of a belated repentance descend upon my soul?

Shall I think of what awaits me beyond the grave . . . . yes, and whether anything at all awaits me there?

No . . . . it seems to me that I shall try not to think, and shall compel my mind to busy itself with some nonsense or other, if only to divert my own attention from the menacing darkness which looms up black ahead.

In my presence one dying person kept complaining that they would not give him red-hot nuts to gnaw . . . and only in the depths of his dimming eyes was there throbbing and palpitating something, like the wing of a bird wounded unto death. . . .

August, 1879.

## "HOW FAIR, HOW FRESH WERE THE ROSES"

SOMEWHERE, some time, long, long ago, I read a poem. I speedily forgot it . . . . but its first line lingered in my memory:

"How fair, how fresh were the roses. . . ."

It is winter now; the window-panes are coated with ice; in the warm chamber a single candle is burning. I am sitting curled up in one corner; and in my brain there rings and rings:

"How fair, how fresh were the roses. . . ."

And I behold myself in front of the low window of a Russian house in the suburbs. The summer evening is melting and merging into night, there is a scent of mignonette and linden-blossoms abroad in the warm air;—and in the window, propped on a stiffened arm, and with her head bent on her shoulder, sits a young girl, gazing mutely and intently at the sky, as though watching for the appearance of the first stars. How ingenuously inspired are the thoughtful eyes; how touchingly innocent are the parted, questioning lips; how evenly breathes her bosom, not yet fully developed and still unagitated by anything; how pure and tender are the lines of the young face! I do not dare to address her, but how dear she is to me, how violently my heart beats!

"How fair, how fresh were the roses. . . ."

And in the room everything grows darker and darker. . . . The candle which has burned low begins to flicker; white shadows waver across the low ceiling; the frost creaks and snarls beyond the wall—and I seem to hear a tedious, senile whisper:

"How fair, how fresh were the roses. . . ."

Other images rise up before me. . . . I hear the merry murmur of family, of country life. Two red-gold little heads, leaning against each other, gaze bravely at me with their bright eyes;

the red cheeks quiver with suppressed laughter; their hands are affectionately intertwined; their young, kind voices ring out, vying with each other; and a little further away, in the depths of a snug room, other hands, also young, are flying about, with fingers entangled, over the keys of a poor little old piano, and the Lanner waltz cannot drown the grumbling of the patriarchal samovár. . . .

"How fair, how fresh were the roses. . . ."

The candle flares up and dies out. . . . Who is that coughing yonder so hoarsely and dully? Curled up in a ring, my aged dog, my sole companion, is nestling and quivering at my feet. . . . I feel cold. . . . I am shivering . . . and they are all dead . . . . all dead. . . .

"How fair, how fresh were the roses."

September, 1879.

## A SEA VOYAGE

I SAILED from Hamburg to London on a small steamer. There were two of us passengers: I and a tiny monkey, a female of the ouistiti breed, which a Hamburg merchant was sending as a gift to his English partner.

She was attached by a slender chain to one of the benches on the deck, and threw herself about and squeaked plaintively, like a bird.

Every time I walked past she stretched out to

me her black, cold little hand, and gazed at me with her mournful, almost human little eyes.—I took her hand, and she ceased to squeak and fling herself about.

There was a dead calm. The sea spread out around us in a motionless mirror of leaden hue. It seemed small; a dense fog lay over it, shrouding even the tips of the masts, and blinding and wearying the eyes with its soft gloom. The sun hung like a dim red spot in this gloom; but just before evening it became all aflame and glowed mysteriously and strangely scarlet.

Long, straight folds, like the folds of heavy silken fabrics, flowed away from the bow of the steamer, one after another, growing ever wider, wrinkling and broadening, becoming smoother at last, swaying and vanishing. The churned foam swirled under the monotonous beat of the paddle-wheels; gleaming white like milk, and hissing faintly, it was broken up into serpent-like ripples, and then flowed together at a distance, and vanished likewise, swallowed up in the gloom.

A small bell at the stern jingled as incessantly and plaintively as the squeaking cry of the monkey.

Now and then a seal came to the surface, and turning an abrupt somersault, darted off beneath the barely-disturbed surface.

And the captain, a taciturn man with a surly,

sunburned face, smoked a short pipe and spat angrily into the sea, congealed in impassivity.

To all my questions he replied with an abrupt growl. I was compelled, willy-nilly, to have recourse to my solitary fellow-traveller—the monkey.

I sat down beside her; she ceased to whine, and again stretched out her hand to me.

The motionless fog enveloped us both with a soporific humidity; and equally immersed in one unconscious thought, we remained there side by side, like blood-relatives.

I smile now . . . . but then another feeling reigned in me.

We are all children of one mother—and it pleased me that the poor little beastie should quiet down so confidingly and nestle up to me, as though to a relative.

November, 1879.

## N. N.

Gracefully and quietly dost thou walk along the path of life, without tears and without smiles, barely animated by an indifferent attention.

Thou art kind and clever . . . . and everything is alien to thee—and no one is necessary to thee.

Thou art very beautiful—and no one can tell whether thou prizest thy beauty or not.—Thou

art devoid of sympathy thyself and demandest no sympathy.

Thy gaze is profound, and not thoughtful; emptiness lies in that bright depth.

Thus do the stately shades pass by without grief and without joy in the Elysian Fields, to the dignified sounds of Gluck's melodies.

November, 1879.

## STAY!

STAY! As I now behold thee remain thou evermore in my memory!

From thy lips the last inspired sound hath burst forth—thine eyes do not gleam and flash, they are dusky, weighted with happiness, with the blissful consciousness of that beauty to which thou hast succeeded in giving expression,—of that beauty in quest of which thou stretchest forth, as it were, thy triumphant, thine exhausted hands!

What light, more delicate and pure than the sunlight, hath been diffused over all thy limbs, over the tiniest folds of thy garments?

What god, with his caressing inflatus, hath tossed back thy dishevelled curls?

His kiss burneth on thy brow, grown pale as marble!

Here it is—the open secret, the secret of poetry, of life, of love! Here it is, here it is—im-

mortality! There is no other immortality—and no other is needed.—At this moment thou art deathless.

I will pass,—and again thou art a pinch of dust, a woman, a child. . . . But what is that to thee!—At this moment thou hast become loftier than all transitory, temporal things, thou hast stepped out of their sphere.—This *thy* moment will never end.

Stay! And let me be the sharer of thy immortality, drop into my soul the reflection of thine eternity!

November, 1879.

## THE MONK

I USED to know a monk, a hermit, a saint. He lived on the sweetness of prayer alone,—and as he quaffed it, he knelt so long on the cold floor of the church that his legs below the knee swelled and became like posts. He had no sensation in them, he knelt—and prayed.

I understood him—and, perhaps, I envied him; but let him also understand me and not condemn me—me, to whom his joys are inaccessible.

He strove to annihilate himself, his hated *ego;* but the fact that I do not pray does not arise from self-conceit.

My ego is, perchance, even more burdensome and repulsive to me than his is to him.

He found a means of forgetting himself . . . . and I find a means to do the same, but not so constantly.

He does not lie . . . . and neither do I lie.

November, 1879.

## WE SHALL STILL FIGHT ON!

WHAT an insignificant trifle can sometimes put the whole man back in tune!

Full of thought, I was walking one day along the highway.

Heavy forebodings oppressed my breast; melancholy seized hold upon me.

I raised my head. . . . Before me, between two rows of lofty poplars, the road stretched out into the distance.

Across it, across that same road, a whole little family of sparrows was hopping, hopping boldly, amusingly, confidently!

One of them in particular fairly set his wings akimbo, thrusting out his crop, and twittering audaciously, as though the very devil was no match for him! A conqueror—and that is all there is to be said.

But in the meantime, high up in the sky, was soaring a hawk who, possibly, was fated to devour precisely that same conqueror.

I looked, laughed, shook myself—and the mel-

ancholy thoughts instantly fled. I felt daring, courage, a desire for life.

And let *my* hawk soar over *me* if he will. . . .

"We will still fight on, devil take it!"

November, 1879.

## PRAYER

No matter what a man may pray for he is praying for a miracle.—Every prayer amounts to the following: "Great God, cause that two and two may not make four."

Only such a prayer is a genuine prayer from a person to a person. To pray to the Universal Spirit, to the Supreme Being of Kant, of Hegel —to a purified, amorphous God, is impossible and unthinkable.

But can even a personal, living God with a form cause that two and two shall not make four?

Every believer is bound to reply, "He can," and is bound to convince himself of this.

But what if his reason revolts against such an absurdity?

In that case Shakspeare will come to his assistance: "There are many things in the world, friend Horatio . . . ." and so forth.

And if people retort in the name of truth,—all he has to do is to repeat the famous question: "What is truth?"